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Mac cabi's European seas on ends

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Jordanian soldier kills 7 schoolgirls



Sivan Fathi



Karen Cohen



Ya'ala Me'iri



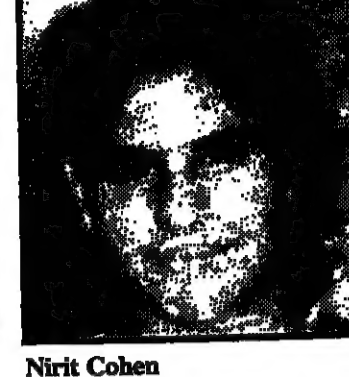
Shiri Badayev



Natali Alkalai



Adi Malka



Nirit Cohen

Hussein: I'd love to visit the bereaved families

By DAVID RUDGE and DAVID MAKOVSKY

Seven schoolgirls were killed and five pupils and a teacher wounded when a crazed Jordanian soldier shot them in cold blood, as they toured the Jordanian-controlled Naharayim enclave in the Jordan Valley yesterday.

The seven victims — Sivan Fathi, Karen Cohen, Ya'ala Me'iri, Shiri Badayev, Natali Alkalai, Adi Malka, and Nirit Cohen — were eighth graders at the AMIT Fuerst School in Beit Shemesh. They were all buried last night. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Education Minister Zevulun Hammer attended the funerals.

Jordan's King Hussein said last

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night he expected to meet Netanyahu very shortly, following yesterday's tragedy. Sources said they believe the monarch would come to Beit Shemesh to pay a condolence call to the victims' families.

At a press conference in Amman last night after returning from Spain, Hussein said, "I would love to visit the families of the bereaved." He termed the tragedy "a slur on all of us," adding, "it's not political, it's a vile crime."

He termed yesterday "a day I never wanted to live to see" and condemned the massacre as an attack against "his sons and daughters in his own home."

Hussein expressed his condolences in a phone call to Netanyahu, which he made while still en route to Jordan. He had delayed a trip to the US and instead



Beit Shemesh residents welcome home their daughter at the AMIT Fuerst school last night, after she returned from Naharayim. (Gadi Cabalo, reproductions by Flash 90, courtesy of 'Me'ariv'; Brian Handler)

Weizman pushes for new peace efforts

By BATSHEVA TSUR

President Ezer Weizman, mediating between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Arab leaders yesterday, called for redoubled efforts to move the peace process forward following the massacre in Naharayim.

"Despite the horrific massacre, I am convinced that all parties concerned are interested in trying to get the peace process back on track," Weizman said, during a visit to the wounded at Hadassah-University Hospital in Ein Kerem, which he made with his wife, Reuma. "I am sure that most of those concerned are still interested in trying to find a way to live together in peace."

Weizman met last night at his residence with Netanyahu, and the two talked together with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. Weizman said he hoped Netanyahu and Arafat would meet again soon to hammer out critical issues that are in dispute.

During his meeting with Netanyahu, Weizman is believed to have suggested postponing the start of construction at Har Homa, saying the issue had come up in all his recent meetings with European leaders.

As Weizman was leaving Hadassah, Arafat called the president's cellular phone and asked him to convey his condolences to the families.

Continued on Page 16

returned home immediately after the shooting. Jordanian Prime Minister Abdel-Karim Kabariti had a swift conversation with Netanyahu yesterday, as he offered condolences. Kabariti also called President Ezer Weizman.

So far, there has been no meeting scheduled between Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman

Yasser Arafat. Arafat is believed to fear that such a meeting, which might then be followed by the start of construction at Har Homa, would embarrass him. But Arafat, who has refused to speak to Netanyahu due to the disputes over Har Homa and the planned redeployment, did call to offer his condolences.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who is currently in the US, also sent a condolence letter to the prime minister. US President Bill Clinton also called.

Earlier this week, Hussein had written a harsh letter to Netanyahu, questioning the prime minister's commitment to peace, and some cabinet ministers charged that yesterday's attack could not be completely divorced from the

monarch's earlier comments to the

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Peled: Naharayim off-limits to school trips

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

The eighth-graders from Beit Shemesh's Fierst School who came under attack at Naharayim were not supposed to be at that site, which is in any case off-limits to school trips, Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled said yesterday.

Peled, who is responsible for the ministry's handling of school trips, told Israel Radio that while he did not want to make any accusations as the matter was still under initial investigation, "schools or [other institutions] in the entire Education Ministry system are not permitted to enter the island at Naharayim at present."

Peled said: "Private individuals can go there, but schools are strictly forbidden from doing so. This school was supposed to be someplace else completely - based on the route approved by the Education Ministry's school trip coordination unit, it was supposed to be on Mt. Arbel and at Kfar Hittim and not at Naharayim...Somebody took it upon themselves to change the route, and apparently this has happened other times."

Asked why the site was off-limits, Peled explained: "The Education Ministry requires an armed adult chaperone for each 15 pupils on such a trip. Since according to the peace agreements between Israel and Jordan, we cannot bring more than four weapons on to the island at Naharayim, the Education Ministry does not permit schools to go there, because this violates the criteria of our trips. There is a complete ban on going to the island at Naharayim."

According to regulations, trip routes must be coordinated with special school trip coordination offices staffed by representatives of the Society for the Preservation of Nature and the ministry, who check safety and security requirements.

Education Minister Zevulun Hammer said although the ministry

"has not yet checked into what was included in the permit," he understood one could not visit such sites without a permit. "But this has nothing to do with it," he said. "Jordanian children can visit on our side of the border in complete safety, and Israeli children are killed on a peaceful border with our closest friend among our neighbors - this is something that never should have happened. The matter of whether schools are allowed to visit there will naturally be looked into, but at this moment, when the bodies are still before us, and the murder is so awful - it wasn't a disturbed soldier, but there is something disturbingly wrong with the peace."

I feel the pain of the families and know we will have to get to the bottom of the matter, and after the funerals we'll talk about it...one must not visit beyond the border of where you have a permit to visit, and I don't know to what degree these things were coordinated."

Asked whether the current political tension contributed to the attack, Hammer said: "No misunderstanding between Israel and Jordan...justifies a soldier firing on Israelis. I don't even understand how you can suggest such a thing. There was no provocation here, we're talking about young girls who came to visit a place that is usually peaceful. Many visit there - again, the matter of whether schools are allowed to visit there shall and will be checked - but this is a border that once was in Israeli hands. True, today it belongs to [Jordan] and these things must be coordinated, but to kill someone? For what?"

Hammer added: "It seems to me that the peace people talk about hasn't been internalized enough, they talk about the era of peace, but it hasn't come yet. We constantly have to be aware of the fragility of the matter, and be careful, but this doesn't mean that from now on, we always have to walk on tippy-toes so that no one kills you for no good reason."



An Israeli helicopter leaves the scene of the attack at Naharayim on the Jordanian side of the border yesterday.

Shooting site was touted 'Island of Peace'

Tens of thousands of Israelis visited area

By HERS KENON

Jordan's King Hussein, in a June 1995 meeting at Naharayim with Yitzhak Rabin and Helmut Kohl, said that "No place better illustrates the fact that we are at peace" than Naharayim.

Until yesterday, indeed, the off-visited island

where the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers meet the Jordan, has - until now - been a symbol of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. A sign at the entrance to the island, located 10 kilometers south of the Kinneret, reads "Island of Peace."

Under the 1994 accord, the Hashemite kingdom regained sovereignty over the area, but Israel leased the land for 25 years, with an option to renew. Kibbutz Ashdot Ya'acov Meuhad and Kibbutz Ashdot Ya'acov Ihud, which have fields and orchards on the island, continue to cultivate them.

The peace treaty stipulates that although Jordan has complete control of the island, Israelis can enter the area, for a fee, without visas or passports. Entrance is through a Jordanian checkpoint.

Tens of thousands of Israelis have taken advantage of this as a way to "go to Jordan" for a few hours. In addition, thousands of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs go there on the weekends to meet relatives from Jordan, and even some who filter down from Syria.

At the end of the day, everyone goes back home. The site is not a transit point between Israel and Jordan.

It is reported yesterday that in recent weeks the Jordanian author-

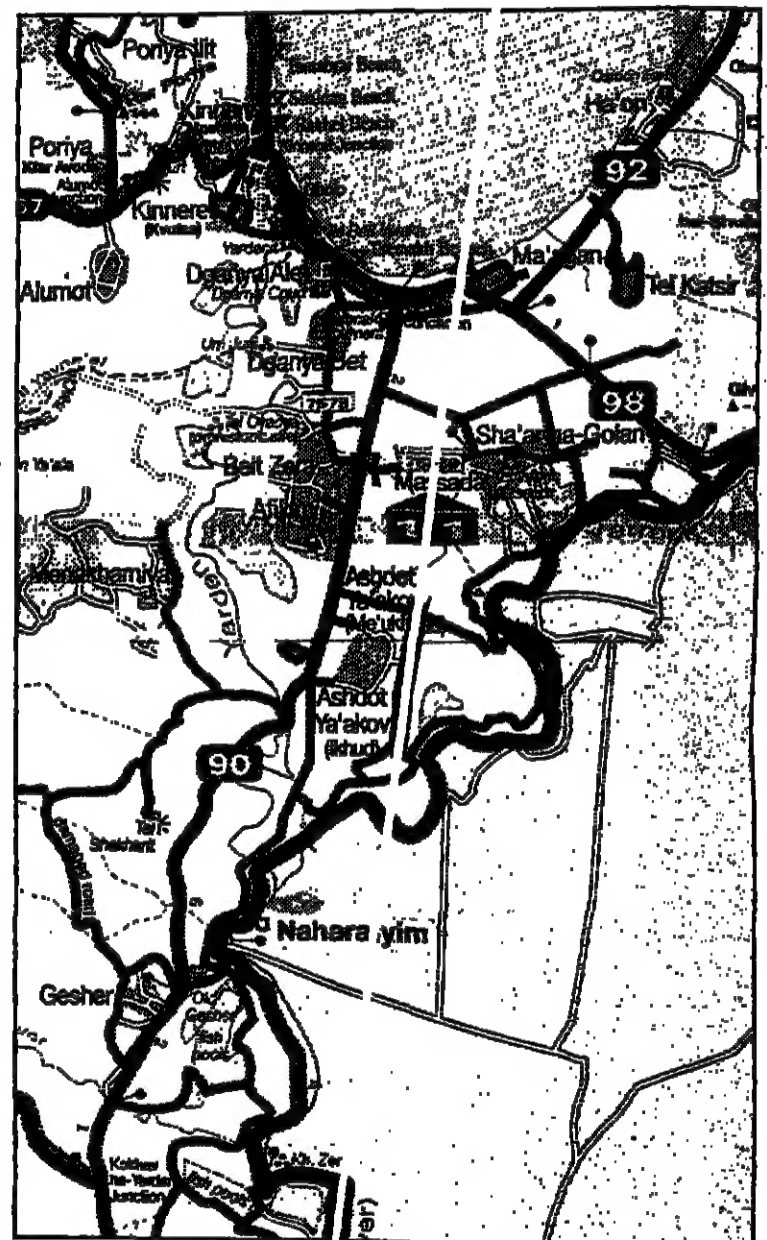
ities alerted Israeli to the possibility that some of the Arab family meetings were more than just picnics, but a means to smuggle arms and even terrorists across the border.

A handful of Jordanian guardposts dot the island. Under the terms of the accord, the IDF and Israel Police are not allowed into the area.

Although the site has turned into a busy tourist attraction, the Education Ministry has forbidden visits there because it is not under IDF control. One of the questions that will have to be answered is why the Beit Shemesh school group was in the area.

In 1925, Pinhas Rutenberg, an engineer who immigrated from Russia, received a concession from the mandatory government to use 6,000 dunams at the junction of the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers for 70 years. He built there the first of a series of dams and power stations that eventually brought electricity to the Yishuv.

At the time, the project, located inside the boundaries of what was then Transjordan, was considered an example of cooperation between Jews and Arabs. The power plant was destroyed by Iraqi troops during the first days of the War of Independence.



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Those holding tickets ending in 89733, 03895, 07833, 05163, 32582, 69092, 13255, 55719, 15096, 97795, 72131, 18401, 37459, 13491, 24591, 81311, 09979, 26853 and 16453 all won NIS 1,000.

Tickets ending in 445, 319, 157 and 641 all won NIS 100; in 45, 44, 77 and 18, NIS 30; in 77 and 57, NIS 20; and in 7 and 3, NIS 10.

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In Beit Shemesh, the wait for names

By ELI WOHLGELER

They stood in pairs, they sat alone: students crying on each other's shoulders, parents huddling with their cigarettes.

At the AMIT Fuerst school in Beit Shemesh yesterday afternoon, the tension of waiting to hear who was killed and who escaped death grew as the day wore on. "I just want them to tell me who's dead and who's been wounded," a father suddenly screamed out.

But for hours there was no official news, no information to share with the hundreds of frantic students and parents who milled around in the courtyard outside the building, and inside the hallway near the principal's office.

Names, they wanted to hear the names. It began at the school at 11:55 a.m., when 12th-grader Inbal Fadida was about to go to her next class. Her cellular phone rang, a call from one of the girls on the

trip.

"She was crying," said Fadida. "She said they had been shot at by the Jordanian border. I asked her if anyone was dead, but she said she didn't know because they wouldn't let her close enough to see."

"At first I didn't believe her, but when I heard her crying, I believed it."

Fadida rushed to the teachers' room to relate what she had heard, and the teachers told the principal. The boys in the school, a state-religious school of some 1,100 students in grades seven through 12,

were told over the loudspeaker to go to the school's synagogue to say Psalms.

Classes were suspended for the rest of the day, and psychologists and social workers were brought in to tend to the more distraught parents and pupils. Now and again someone collapsed from the anxiety and tension, and medics from Magen David Adom lifted them onto stretchers and offered aid.

One 12th-grade classroom was set up as a makeshift first-aid room. On the wall were newspaper clippings from a previous tragedy:

Pictures of the 73 soldiers who were killed in last month's helicopter crash. The clippings were quickly taken down.

Down the hall in another classroom, students sat in front of a television, watching the news bulletins.

For everyone, shock and disbelief was the overwhelming reaction; the lack of names just made it worse.

"It's a very hard situation for the parents, the tension of not knowing who has been killed," said one psychologist on duty.

For hours everyone stood around,

some making small talk, others chain smoking, many glued to the radio, everyone trying to stay calm in the face of impending bad news.

One mother grabbed the shoulders of an elderly man, both their eyes red from tears, in a "be strong" embrace. "I won't believe [she's alive] until I see her in front of me," said the man.

For the pupils, too, there was a dazed feeling.

"I'm just in shock," said Shlomo Revivo, 17. "I know some of the kids in that class, but I don't know who got killed and who got hurt,

and I'm just waiting here to find out."

Some of the eighth graders on the trip called their parents' cellular phones to tell them they were alive and OK.

This brought relief to some, but made other parents more anxious. "Ask about my daughter," screamed one mother, standing near a parent who had gotten a call from hers.

Other pupils called the school, and announcements over the loudspeakers asked those parents to come to the phone. A phone call meant good news.

Outside in the hallway, some 12th-grade boys were talking politics.

"This peace is not real, and there won't ever be peace," said 17-year-old Ehud Amitai. "The Arabs don't want peace, they want the whole country."

Some of his classmates echoed the sentiment, expressing a frustration felt by many.

Others dealt with the tension in their own way: At one table in the teachers' room, where many parents were gathered, a father sat alone, reciting Psalms, waiting to hear the names.



Inbal Fadida: At first I didn't believe what my friend was telling me, but when I heard her crying, I believed it. (Brian Handler)



Members of the Azulai family share relief at the AMIT Fuerst school yesterday afternoon after finding out that their daughter was not injured in the shooting incident. (Brian Handler)

Recent clashes on the Israeli-Jordanian border

• April 11, 1995 - A 19-year-old Palestinian was wounded by Dead Sea Works security guards near Sdom, after he crossed the border and attempted to kidnap a worker.

• April 15, 1995 - A Jordanian was killed near Oujja, north of Jericho, while trying to infiltrate into Israel.

• May 4, 1995 - A Jordanian citizen who infiltrated into Israel near Kibbutz Afikim was returned to Jordan after it was determined he had not entered Israel armed.

• June 4, 1995 - A Jordanian who crossed into Israel near the Dead Sea Works was returned to Jordan after a short interrogation.

• June 24, 1995 - Three Islamic Jihad activists crossed from Jordan into Israel in the Jordan Valley. Soldiers shot one dead and captured the second. The third surrendered to General Security Service agents and IDF soldiers two days later.

• August 12, 1995 - A Palestinian was apprehended near Argaman in the Jordan Valley while smuggling weapons.

• November 21, 1995 - An IDF soldier was lightly wounded in a shooting exchange with a gunman who tried to infiltrate from Jordan into Israel near Kibbutz Geshar. The gunman was killed.

• June 26, 1996 - Three soldiers were killed and two lightly wounded when gunmen who had crossed into Israel from Jordan ambushed an IDF patrol east of Moshav Na'aran.

• November 2, 1996 - A man believed to be Jordanian was killed near Kfar Ruppin while trying to cross the Israeli-Jordanian border.

'It was like war' said dazed survivors of the attack

Fourteen-year-old Hila Ivri lay next to her twin sister in Poriya Hospital near Tiberias yesterday, and relived how a "bad guy with big eyes" shot them on a school trip to Naharayim.

Another survivor of the Jordanian soldier's attack recalled how her friend fell on her as the shots rang out.

"I screamed 'Nirit, Nirit, get up, I'm scared, get up,'" Tali Sa'ad said, after those who had escaped unscathed returned to their hometown of Beit Shemesh. "I turned her over and saw a bullet hole in her chest."

Sa'ad, her voice shaking with emotion, said her friend opened her eyes, looked at her, and died.

"All the girls screamed and cried and ran beneath bushes to hide. Many girls were hurt and bloody. I was hit in the leg," Ivri

said. Her sister was shot in the stomach.

"I saw the gunman. He held his gun. He was shooting, and then he started shooting again...He was a bad guy with big eyes," she said.

"I saw one girl who was hit in the shoulder. She rolled over the bushes and then stopped breathing."

Jordanian authorities were briefing the group's teachers when a uniformed Jordanian standing on a hill above them took aim and emptied an entire ammunition clip.

"It was like war, girls hit in the throat, in the neck, in the stomach, on their legs," said teacher Zecharya Ozeri, clutching a denim school bag he said belonged to one of the dead girls from the Fuerst school.

Another survivor, who gave her name as Dafna, said one of the adults on the trip shouted at the girls to take cover.

"I flattened myself on the ground with my friend and said 'Shema Yisrael,' she said. Later, dazed survivors - some of them scratched after taking cover during the shooting - hugged their parents in an emotional reunion outside the school.

"We were told school groups traveled in the area daily...it was a quiet area," said principal Moshe Ablovich. The Education Ministry said it never approved field trips to the site because of security concerns.

"Tomorrow will be a regular school day...and each class will meet with its teacher and a psychologist so the children can release their emotions," Ablovich told reporters. (Reuter)

THE LOUISIANA PROCESS



THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE

We, the Israeli members of the steering committee of the recently established International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace, which, in Copenhagen, brought together for the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict leading Egyptians, Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians, are greatly alarmed that, at this critical stage in our common effort to achieve a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Arab world, decisions have been taken by the Government of Israel which could endanger the whole future of the peace process.

In our Copenhagen Declaration, we stressed that "to create an atmosphere of amity for negotiations, no resort to violence or terrorism in any form should be accepted or condoned. To ally Palestinian fears, no new settlements should be built, and no Palestinian land, state or private, will be expropriated."

The decisions taken not only run counter to creating an atmosphere of amity for negotiations but they undermine the positive climate that was created after agreement was attained on the Hebron issue.

We call on the Government of Israel not to take any action that could endanger the peace process which is of such importance to us all. We call on the Palestinian Authority to take every step possible to prevent outbreaks of violence. We call on all parties to the peace process, and especially on the Prime Minister of Israel, to remain steadfastly on the course for peace, and not to take any decisions which could deflect us from that course.

The International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace will spare no effort to establish genuine Arab-Israeli relations based on respect for our mutual rights and the dignity and security of our peoples. Jerusalem should be the center for building mutual confidence; the decisions taken with regard to building new quarters in East Jerusalem, and especially the manner in which they were taken and their timing, have had the opposite result and therefore should not be implemented.

We will consult the other partners in the International Steering Committee about the present critical situation in the peace process.

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For the class which will open in October 1997, an information session with Associate Dean, Edmund J. Wilson, of the Kellogg School, will be held on Thursday, March 27, 1997, at 5:00 p.m. at the Graduate School of Business Administration, the Recanati Building, Tel-Aviv University. For further information and confirmation of your participation at the meeting, Call: 03-6409955, Fax: 6407803.



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Bi-national inquiry launched over attack

By DAVID RUDGE

A joint Jordanian-Israeli inquiry was launched yesterday into the Naharayim shooting, which, in a period of minutes, turned a popular tourist site into a killing field.

The investigation will try to ascertain how an unarmed Jordanian soldier, reportedly a driver, managed to take a rifle from one of his colleagues and open fire on a group of Beit Shemesh schoolgirls. It will also have to investigate why Jordanian soldiers refused to allow Israeli soldiers and policemen enter the area to treat and evacuate the casualties.

Nearly 40 minutes – a critical period in terms of treating wounded – elapsed before emergency crews were permitted access to the site, according to initial reports.

Jordan Valley Regional Council chairman Ze'ev Shore said the delay totally contradicted the terms of the peace accord in which Naharayim was returned to Jordanian sovereignty.

"The agreement says that if there should be an incident in which Israelis are involved, the [Israeli] police are allowed to go inside," said Shore.

"What happened here is that after the shooting, the police went to the Jordanian barrier and the Jordanians stopped them. The police stood there helplessly."

"They begged to be allowed into the area. Rescue services arrived but were not allowed in. This is a clear violation of the agreement."

"This is very serious in a place, which we signed in an agreement with the Jordanians, is a place where people can visit and tour around. The Jordanians are the ones responsible for the security of the visitors and are

the ones who breached the agreement by not allowing our forces to go in," said Shore.

He stressed that what had happened was not characteristic of relations between local residents and those on the Jordanian side, which have been very good.

There were also reports that the Jordanians themselves acted quickly and helped those girls who were unhurt or lightly wounded back onto their bus while evacuating the more serious casualties to the nearest Jordanian hospital near Shuna.

Subsequent inquiries revealed that at least one MDA ambulance was admitted to the site immediately after the incident and brought out some of the wounded, along with two of those killed.

After the evacuation, the site was closed by the Jordanian authorities and was only reopened afterwards to MDA ambulances.

Boaz Norkin, head of MDA services in the North, said the crews had acted quickly and were the only rescue teams that entered the field at the beginning and once the barriers were reopened 40 minutes later.

"All I can say is that I hope this will be the last time we have to deal with a situation like this," Norkin said.

Itm adds: School psychologists and social workers were dispatched to Kibbutz Geshar near Naharayim after the attack and began counseling pupils. The kibbutz closed its gates to journalists.

A security coordinator at the site said that the Education and Defense ministries had banned entry of anyone but kibbutz workers or members. He said a few individual parents had arrived at the kibbutz and had emotional meetings with their children.



Jordanian Crown Prince Hassan (left), visits one of the wounded girls at a hospital near Shuna.

Jordanian town sympathetic, but blames Netanyahu for slaughter

SHUNA, Jordan (Reuters) – Residents of this northern Jordan town offered blood and sympathy for the schoolgirls who were shot by a Jordanian soldier yesterday, but blamed Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu for the attack.

"The attack should not have been against young innocent children but against Netanyahu who is stubborn and a tyrant," said Mifteh Awad, an elderly farmer sitting with other locals in a coffee shop in the center of Shuna, 75 km. north of Amman.

Hospital workers and doctors said over 20 people rushed to donate blood to the victims after Jordanian military cars took them to the local hospital here a few kilometers from where the shooting took place.

But residents said their sympathy for the victims did not diminish their fury with Netanyahu, whose plans to build Jewish housing at Har Homa has sparked widespread anger in the Arab world.

"Netanyahu's behavior has pushed this soldier to commit this act ... this was

bound to happen. Israel has been encouraging this with the building of settlements," said one youth who refused to give his name.

"The soldier is an ordinary citizen who has felt let down and was not ready to keep his emotions seeing his people [the Palestinians] there across the river being destroyed," he said.

"What can Netanyahu expect if Palestinian Arab land is usurped ... When your land is taken over, you are entitled to

resist by all means," another said.

Sheikh Yusef Ahmed, a local elder, said Israel wanted domination, not genuine peace with its neighbors.

"All the Jordanian people extended their hands for peace but the Israelis have not extended their hands fully for an honorable, just and comprehensive peace," he said, echoing widespread disappointment by ordinary Jordanians with the few gains so far from the 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

KILLS

Continued from Page 1

premier.

Foreign Minister David Levy declared, "All verbal violence and threats of violence are immediately translated into actions, such as yesterday's killing fields ... Jordan must take stock and monitor all those who have weapons. This psychological escalation could cause more catastrophes. Who knows how many crazies who carry weapons are waiting for the 'Green Light' [as they interpret] statements made characterizing Israel as it is characterized today."

Netanyahu, in a statement yesterday, also warned that violence emerges from a climate of crisis being whipped up.

The Jordanians have launched a full inquiry into the massacre, which occurred yesterday morning while the bus of schoolgirls was visiting the enclave, which was returned to Jordanian sovereignty

under the terms of the peace accord with Israel.

The children had gotten off the bus after entering the enclave, passing through the Jordanian border post, where their ID cards were checked. One of the teachers' assistants on the tour, Ya'acov Zecharya, said that they were standing at the observation post overlooking the site of the historic Rutenberg hydroelectric plant when the massacre occurred.

A soldier, reportedly a driver named Ahmed Moussa, 26, from Adasiya, a town near the site, took a colleague's rifle and climbed the observation tower, above the site where the children were standing.

Zecharya said he saw the soldier climb down from the tower and come towards them; as he did this, he opened fire at the girls, who had their backs to him.

"We were standing there listening to the guide with our backs to the Jordanian soldiers when I saw him come down and put a magazine in his rifle and start to open

fire," said Zecharya. "The girls started screaming. We thought to try and stop him but we had no means to do so. We started to push the girls down the embankment."

"All the Jordanian soldiers had automatic weapons but they didn't do anything to push him or shoot at him to stop him."

"I saw that he was determined to kill the girls, the children, whoever," said Zecharya.

The soldier, eyewitnesses said, continued firing, apparently emptying one magazine before his second jammed. It was at that point that other Jordanian soldiers jumped on him and managed to subdue him.

Tour guide Raz Hess said he saw the gunman approach a girl who was still standing and fire at her from point-blank range, shooting her in the head.

A kindergarten teacher from nearby Kibbutz Ashdot Ya'acov witnessed the horror from a distance. She heard the first burst of gunfire, turned round as the second burst came and saw the children tumbling down the slope and screaming.

"It was terrible, just horrible," she said.

She said there was panic and uncertainty at the scene as police and army units tried to get through to the site, and calls were made to bring in rescue services. MDA crews arrived at the scene within a few minutes. One crew was allowed to enter the site by the Jordanian soldiers, although police and IDF soldiers, as well as an IDF ambulance, were not allowed through.

Two of the dead girls were

brought to the Israeli side, as were four of the wounded, and those who were unhurt. The four wounded youngsters were evacuated to Poriya Hospital suffering from light to moderate gunshot wounds. The hospital reported that they were in satisfactory condition.

Two of the wounded and five of those killed were apparently left behind at the scene when the others were evacuated and they were taken by the Jordanians to a hospital in the nearby village of Shuna.

Several hours later, the bodies of the five, together with the two wounded girls, were brought by an IAF helicopter to Hadassah University Hospital in Jerusalem's Ein Kerem.

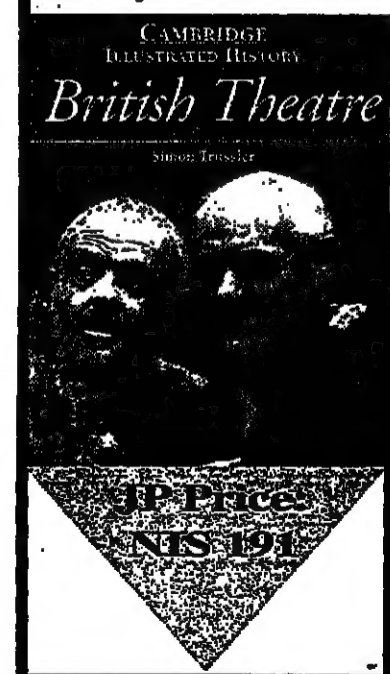
Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, accompanied by OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan, arrived at the site, where they were met by Crown Prince Hassan, dressed in full military uniform, and senior Jordanian officials.

"On behalf of the Jordanian army and all Jordanians, I want to say that this is a black day in the history of our country," said Hassan. "I want to emphasize that justice will be served and that a full investigation will be conducted with the full knowledge of the Israeli police."

The massacre came as a shock to residents of the area who had viewed the Naharayim enclave as a symbol of peace between Jordan and Israel. The land was returned to Jordanian sovereignty but farmers from two kibbutzim, Ashdot Ya'acov and Ashdot Ya'acov Meuhad, are permitted under the peace accord to continue to cultivate the land.

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Israelis barred from Naharayim

By ARNOLD O'SULIVAN

Acting on orders from Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, the IDF and Israeli Police have barred Israelis and tourists from entering the Naharayim enclave until the investigation into yesterday's massacre is completed.

Defense officials said it was possible that Israel would ask to renegotiate the security arrangements at Naharayim, but they added this would only be discussed following the inquiry.

Speaking at the site of the attack, Mordechai hinted it may have been instigated by the recent caustic comments by Jordanian leaders against the Israeli government.

"To my regret, verbal violence can bring about physical violence," Mordechai said. "Look how words and a harsh atmosphere can also lead to violence. What is needed now from all leaders is to do everything possible to prevent violence and prevent a process in which someone will

translate it into taking up arms and start killing and drastically harm the peace process which took so much hard work."

While Israeli leaders linked the shooting to the recent harsh criticism against Israel by Jordanians, the Jordanians expressed deep regret for the attack. Both King Hussein and Jordan's Prime Minister Abdul-Karim Kabariti telephoned Mordechai and extended their condolences.

"What can I say other than [to speak of] a sense of deep embarrassment and human anguish," said Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan during a visit to Naharayim. "I want to emphasize that justice will be served, that a full investigation will be conducted, that this investigation will be with the full knowledge of the Israeli police," Hassan added.

King Hussein spoke to Mordechai in the afternoon, but it wasn't until late last night that he telephoned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

As soon as word of the attack

reached Israel, the IDF contacted Jordanian commanders at all levels to coordinate the evacuation of those wounded who were brought to the hospital in Shuna. The action was commanded by Northern Police Commander Supt. Alec Ron and OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan, who has good relations with the Jordanians.

Dayan visited the wounded in the hospital, escorted by Prince Hassan and top Jordanian Army officers.

The attack was an embarrassment for the Jordanians and a failure that may cost them not just a setback in relations, but also a change in the character of their hold on the Naharayim enclave.

"I demanded that there be a representative of the Israel Police on the investigation team, so that we know everything that happened here in a true and accurate way, and so we can draw the right conclusions and [take] steps if needed," Mordechai said.



Margalit Badayev is comforted by a friend as she weeps at her daughter Shiri's funeral in Givat Shaul last night. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a eulogy: "If anyone thinks the murder of little girls will bring this people to its knees...break our spirit or that we will relinquish our birthright, holy land and our eternal capital, he does not know the strength that exists in each person standing here around me today and in the entire nation."

Clinton condemns shooting

By HILLEL KUTTLER and agencies

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton condemned yesterday's shooting in which seven Israeli schoolgirls were murdered, but urged that "no one jump to any undue conclusions" that the killing came in response to tensions over Har Homa.

"There is no evidence at this moment that this terrible incident is related to the tensions in the area over the issues," Clinton told reporters as he left the White House for a trip to North Carolina. "For all we know, this may have been just a deranged person. And I think it is important, given King Hussein and Jordan's long record of reaching for peace and reconciliation, that no one jump to any undue conclusions."

"We don't have the facts... But we have no reason to believe that this was politically motivated by any larger group or anything. We just don't know that."

Clinton called the shootings a "senseless denial of a future for these children" and said, "There is no justification or excuse for these acts. I condemn this act in the strongest possible terms."

Clinton said he would keep the slain girls in his thoughts when he visited a Florida elementary school today.

"I call on the leaders and the people in the region to condemn violence," Clinton said.

According to a Jordanian official here, "there is a possibility" that King Hussein might cancel his visit to Washington to supervise the investigation into the killing. Hussein returned home from Spain after hearing the news of the shoot-

ing and at minimum will not arrive in Washington on Saturday as scheduled, the official said.

"Obviously, he's concerned about what happened because it was in Jordan and these [victims] were obviously guests. He wanted to deal with it firsthand."

Ambassador Fayez Tarawne called his counterpart Elyahu Ben-Elissar to express his condolences, an Israeli Embassy official said.

Clinton told reporters he had not spoken to Hussein but had conveyed his sympathy to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Hussein is scheduled to meet with Clinton on Monday.

Clinton said the incident "will bear heavily on my mind" and that there is "no justification or excuse" for it. He also urged leaders in the region to "do everything in their power to create an atmosphere in which violence is rejected rather than embraced."

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns called the killer a "madman," but said he did not know that he was "certifiably crazy."

"Anyone, any soldier, who opens fire on a group of schoolgirls is a mad person, absolutely," Burns said. Burns said the US believes Hussein will carry through with his visit, but that it would "obviously understand" a decision to postpone it.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright issued a statement, calling the shooting "especially heartrending."

"The loss of children is particularly tragic because it is through the peace process that we are trying to create for them a better future," she

said. The Palestinian Authority also expressed its condolences.

Ahmed Abdel-Rahman, PA Cabinet secretary, said, "I hope there will be nothing in the future like this tragedy, against innocent people, girls, who have nothing to do with war and politics."

He was relieved to hear the killer was not a Palestinian.

"Perhaps it came from what he read in the newspaper concerning King Hussein's letter to Netanyahu."

Hanan Ashrawi, PA Higher Education Minister, said the massacre "was the result of the extremely volatile situation created by the Israeli government's policy on settlements, of actually creating on the Arab side and the Palestinian side an atmosphere of hostility and distrust."

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Security Council also condemned the murders.

A spokesman for Annan said in a statement the UN chief "deplores this act of violence and extends condolences to the families of the victims and the government and people of Israel."

"Today's tragic incident highlights the need to renew confidence in the peace process, whose objective is the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East," the statement added.

Council President Zbigniew Wlosowicz of Poland told reporters that council members "learned with great sorrow and concern of the tragic attack on Israeli children earlier today near the Jordan river."

French President Jacques Chirac added his voice to the condemnations. "I learned with horror of this abominable attack... and wish to share with you my indignation and sadness," Chirac aides quoted him as messaging Netanyahu from Brazil, where Chirac is on an official visit.

Jon Immanuel contributed to this report.

Tichon: The pain is all of ours

LIAT COLLINS

Expressions of shock, sorrow and condolences were made across the political spectrum following yesterday's deadly attack in Naharayim. Nearly all the responses included a call for restraint.

Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon sent a message of condolence to Beit Shמש Mayor Danny Vaknin in the name of the whole House saying, "The pain is all of ours and it is our duty to stand as one in the face of this type of madman: for life, for peace and for the future of our children."

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid announced his party would postpone a no-confidence motion scheduled for Monday "because it is not appropriate during a week of mourning."

Education Minister and National Religious Party leader Zevulun Hammer said: "The murder is shocking proof of just how far the age of peace is from being peaceful." The faction issued a statement

saying, "there is no consolation and no atonement for the deaths of innocent schoolgirls."

Dalia Itzhak, head of the Labor party's response team, stressed that "words can cause madness to carry out hideous crimes." MK Yossi Beilin, a candidate for the Labor party leadership, said both Israel and the Arab states must be aware that words can cause people to squeeze the trigger.

MK Michael Kleiner (Gesher), head of the Land of Israel Front, described the letter sent by King

Hussein to Netanyahu as "an invitation to murder."

Some faction chairman Eliezer Zandberg said the "terror attack is additional proof that a crisis with verbal attacks can on the Arab side turn into an act of violence. It's a real danger that needs to be dealt with."

The Hadash faction issued a statement condemning "the dreadful murder of schoolgirls in the Jordan Valley," and called for restraint and "to avoid cynically exploiting the tragedy to worsen the crisis in relations with Jordan."

Teacher: It was a nightmare

By DAVID RUDGE

Schoolteacher Rosa Hini yesterday described the events that brought a bloody and tragic end to the annual tour for seventh and eighth graders from the AMIT Faerst school.

"We reached the Naharayim enclave at 10:15 and were asked to hand over the weapons at the kibbutz and begin the tour with the guide, who was very nice," Hini said.

"We got out of the bus at the observation point and started to see all the process of the pumps at the (former) Naharayim electricity plant. In the middle of the description, suddenly we heard a burst of fire. I looked up and saw the Jordanian soldier firing from the observation tower."

"I shouted to the girls to go down the bank which was covered in mustard plants in bloom. The girls started to take cover as one burst came after another."

"The soldier saw that he was not succeeding, so he came after us to the edge (of the slope) and started firing at us from face-to-face distance. He had to change a magazine and when he did so, which didn't work, that was the end of it. It was a nightmare. I still can't take in what happened here."

"I started to call the girls who were around me and saw that some of them didn't answer me. I said to myself, 'What will happen until help comes?' so I started to push them into the field and covered them until help came."

"Afterwards, I asked the children to get back on the bus. The Jordanian soldiers were by then prepared for what had happened. They came down but didn't allow us to touch our dead and wounded."

"We struggled with them and took several of the casualties onto the bus and the rest, they (Jordanians) took them to Jordan." The surviving youngsters along with their teacher were taken to the clubhouse at nearby Kibbutz Gesher, where they were given first aid where necessary, food and drink, and telephones to call their anxious parents.

"They are hysterical. We didn't tell them all the truth. We told them that some are wounded and some of them would not be coming back to us," said Hini at the kibbutz before leaving to continue the process of identifying the youngsters killed in the massacre.

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PARTICIPATIE MAATSCHAPPIJ GRAAFSCHAP HOLLAND, N.V.
(hereinafter: "the Offeror")
(a subsidiary of Assicurazioni Generali S.p.A.)

That on the 12th of March, 1997, the Offeror submitted to the Securities Authority, the Companies Registrar, the Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange (hereinafter: "TASE"), and to Leumi Insurance Holdings Ltd. (hereinafter: "the Company"), a purchase offer pursuant to a specification, in accordance with the Securities Regulations (Purchase offer), 5754-1994 (hereinafter: "the Purchase Offer Regulations"), addressed to all holders of Ordinary Shares of NIS 0.01 n.v. of the Company (hereinafter: "the Holders") for the purchase of up to 317,124,199 of their shares in the Company (hereinafter: "the Specification").

- (a) The Offeror wishes to acquire up to 317,124,199 shares of the Company (hereinafter: "the Shares") from all the Holders of Ordinary Shares of NIS 0.01 n.v. of the Company who accept the Offer, pursuant to the conditions of the Purchase Offer; provided that no Holder will be permitted to sell more than 42.202% of his shareholdings in the Company on March 18, 1997, at the end of the business day (hereinafter: "the Determining Date"); and provided that on the date of submission of Notice of Acceptance by him, he will hold a number equal to the number of shares listed in the Notice of Acceptance, and that will not engage in any transaction involving said shares so long as the Notice of Acceptance has not been cancelled, according to the procedure set forth in the specification.
- (b) In calculating the amount to which the Shareholder is entitled under Paragraph 5.1 of the Specification, fractions of a share of NIS 0.01 n.v. equal to or greater than one-half share will be considered a complete share; fractions of a share of NIS 0.01 n.v. which are less than one-half share will not be included in the calculation.
- (a) The price to be paid by the Offeror will be the sum of NIS 3.2755 per share, as adjusted for increases in the Consumer Price Index published in March 1997, for February 1997, in comparison with the index published for January 1997 (143.7), as set forth in the Specification. The payment will be executed on March 30, 1997, in the manner provided in the Specification.
- (b) The last price of share on the TASE prior to the date of the Specification, on March 12, 1997, was NIS 2.54 per share. The average price per share from January 12, 1997 (the date on which the shares were listed for trading on the TASE), until March 12, 1997, is NIS 2.461 per share.
- The Purchase Offer will be effected by way of a member of the TASE, Bank Leumi LeIsrael B.M. (hereinafter: "the Offer Coordinator") in the manner prescribed in the Purchase Offer.
- It will be possible to submit Acceptance Notices during the period beginning Wednesday, March 19, 1997, and ending on Thursday, March 27, 1997, at 13:00.

A Non-Registered Shareholder - will submit Notice of Acceptance to members of the TASE on the above mentioned days in accordance with the instructions contained in paragraph 8.2 of the Specification.

A Registered Shareholder - will submit Notice of Acceptance to the Offer Coordinator at his office, 2 Lilienblum Street, Tel-Aviv, in accordance with the instructions contained in paragraph 8.3 of the Specification.

Copies of the full text of the Specification may be obtained at bank branches, from members of the TASE and from the Offer Coordinator, at the office whose address is listed above.

The full text of the Specification is binding text, and nothing in this Notice or its contents shall be construed as obligating the Offeror or to constitute an offer of any kind on the part of the Offeror.

Date of Specification: 12 March, 1997

PARTICIPATIE MAATSCHAPPIJ GRAAFSCHAP HOLLAND, N.V.

* This is a translation of the hebrew notice published in hebrew in "Haaretz" and in "Maariv" on March 13, 1997.

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The Naharayim tragedy

Once again, the hearts of all Israelis are sickened by the news of a terrible tragedy. Seven young girls, on a school trip to see a concrete example of the warm peace with Jordan, were massacred by a rogue Jordanian soldier. The response to the loss of so many young lives must go beyond a temporary hiatus from rhetoric that incites violence. Even if the action was of an isolated madman, it should force responsible Arab leaders to address the culture of hatred against Israel that permeates the Arab world.

The youngsters were standing on Naharayim, the "island of peace," a spit of land that was transferred to Jordan by Israel under the peace treaty, but was leased back by Israel so the nearby kibbutzim could continue to cultivate their fields there. Just as the girls were listening to a description of this close Israeli-Jordanian cooperation, they were fired upon.

For Jordan, this incident constitutes a tremendous security failure and is a deep embarrassment. King Hussein quickly called President Weizman to say he felt as if the tragedy had happened to "his children." Later, however, he defended the blistering letter he had sent Sunday to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, in which he blamed Israel's policies for fostering "inevitable violent resistance" from the Palestinians.

Israeli leaders, such as Netanyahu, Foreign Minister David Levy, and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai were right to conclude from this incident that the drumbeat of similar predictions of "spontaneous" violence from the Palestinians, Jordan, and Egypt must stop.

As Netanyahu put it, "I believe that this incident demonstrates what I have long contended—that the mentality of certain elements who sanctify violence and are prepared to use violence poses the greatest threat to the peace process. Neither do I expect anyone to grant legitimacy to violence, in any form. We may have political differences, but there must be a total, absolute and vigorous rejection of all manifestations of violence, of this or any other kind."

King Hussein, and all those who have recently been predicting violence, would no doubt deny that they support violence, or that such predictions lead to violence. The fact is that predictions of violence are a subtle form of justification, particularly if they are not accompanied by explicit rejections of violence and calls for restraint.

Whether or not this specific slaughter was caused by all the talk of potential violence is a moot point; chances are that we will never know. What we do know is that those who seek to advance their interests in the peace process by fostering a climate of violence are playing with fire. They certainly should not be allowed to get away with doing so in the name of the peace.

But the problem is deeper than those who claim to be promoting peace by threatening violence. There is a longer-term problem that likely had as much or more influence on the Jordanian soldier than the current tense atmosphere: The widespread opposition in the Arab world to any accommodation with Israel.

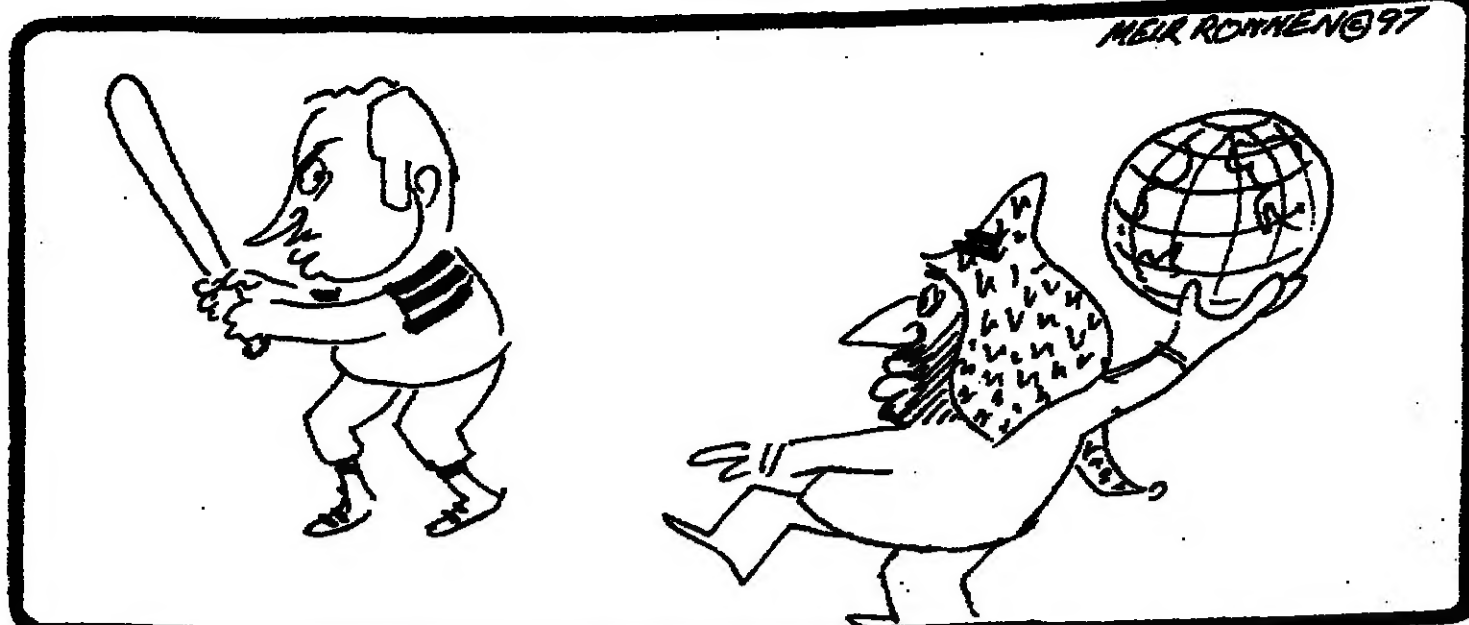
As the noted Arab-American political analyst Fouad Ajami wrote in a much-quoted article in *U.S. News and World Report*, "There has been no discernible change in the Arab attitudes toward Israel and little preparation in the Arab world for the accommodation the peace promised. The great refusal persists. A foul wind attends this peace in Arab lands. It blows in that 'Arab street' of ordinary men and women, among the intellectuals and the writers, and in the professional syndicates. The force of this refusal can be seen in the press of the governments and of the oppositionists, among the secularists and the Islamists alike, in countries that have concluded diplomatic agreements with Israel and those that haven't. This is the one great Arab fidelity that endures in a political culture that has been subjected to historic ruptures of every kind."

It is ironic that in Israel the strongest support for the peace process is among intellectuals, while in Egypt and Jordan the exact opposite situation persists. In the Arab world, the peace with Israel is, as Ajami puts it, a "peace of kings and pharaohs," not of the people at large.

Normally far-sighted leaders such as King Hussein understand this, and are courageous in their attempts to lead by example. Over time, the sight of Arab leaders meeting their Israeli counterparts, Israeli flags flying in their capitals, Israeli tourists visiting their countries, and slowly break taboos and barriers. But this sort of evolutionary process does not move quickly enough. It must be supplemented by effort, not just from the top down, but from the ground up.

The maps throughout the Arab world on which Israel does not appear—including those on official Palestinian documents—must be changed. Arab schoolchildren should learn not only about the wars with Israel, but also about the hope for peace. Arab intellectuals and professionals who know better must challenge their colleagues and professional associations to talk to Israelis, not boycott them. The "people-to-people" sections of Egyptian and Jordanian peace treaties and the Oslo II accord should not be ignored.

The Israeli Embassy in Jordan was flooded yesterday with expressions of deep sorrow and embarrassment, from Jordanians in all walks of life, at the massacre perpetrated by one of their own. The most constructive outcome from this terrible tragedy would be if it sparked efforts to build a culture of peace in the Arab world.



The trouble is the nature of Oslo

GERALD M. STEINBERG

Once again, Israel is in crisis. Headlines scream warnings of violence and an end to the peace process if "something isn't done." And yesterday's devastating news of seven killed and over a dozen wounded in the terrorist attack at Naharayim only made the stomach churn more.

Everywhere one looks—building plans for Har Homa, the extent of Israeli redeployment, angry words from King Hussein, signs of frost in relations with Washington, more UN resolutions, and the international "pressure Israel" conference in Gaza—it seems there is conflict.

However, it was all entirely predictable, and not because "Hussein has lost trust in Netanyahu," or some other simplistic explanation. By carrying through the Hebron withdrawal, releasing Palestinian terrorists, and other actions, Netanyahu made a credible effort to limit the crisis, but in reality there was little he could do.

The real cause of the trouble is the nature of the Oslo process, with the assumption that the most difficult decisions could be delayed and then suddenly solved in the final status negotiations.

Take the three key issues—Jerusalem, a Palestinian state, and Jewish settlements. On these, it makes little difference who's prime minister—Rabin, Peres, or Netanyahu. None of them could satisfy "Palestinian" and "Arab" demands.

All public opinion polls show that measures to ensure continued

Jewish control of a united Jerusalem are supported by a vast majority of Israelis.

Most Israelis want to ensure that Jewish access to the center of Jewish life and religion, lost for 2,000 years and only regained in 1967, is not lost again.

Yasser Arafat's antics after the Western Wall Tunnel exit was opened in September, resulting in many totally meaningless deaths

is the extent of the Israeli redeployment—and this relates directly to the issue of a Palestinian state. This is another question that was left to the "final status talks," because here too, there was no basis for agreement.

For the Palestinians it's simple: The more Israel withdraws, the easier it will be to declare a state unilaterally. Netanyahu has this figured out as well, which means

Why assume that the most difficult decisions can be delayed, then suddenly solved in final status negotiations?

(the exit stayed open and has been forgotten), reinforced this consensus.

It is difficult to conceive of any government compromising on the consolidation of Jewish rights in Jerusalem. The Har Homa building plan was approved by Rabin, and a Labor-led government would have made the same decision to go ahead—and been similarly criticized.

This isn't an ideological issue; neither is it dependent on the level of trust between Netanyahu and Arafat, Netanyahu and Hussein, or Netanyahu and Clinton. It is part of the battle for control over Jerusalem—and the battle became inevitable with the Oslo agreement, in which the future of Jerusalem was opened up for discussion.

The second source of the crisis

that here also the conflict was inevitable.

THE architects of Oslo naively hoped that by the time the issues of Jerusalem, borders, and settlements came on the table, the interim period would have created enough trust and cooperation to bridge the gaps.

The theory was that the Israelis and Arabs—on Jerusalem, in particular, the Palestinians are part of the wider Arab coalition, with echoes of the 1940s and 1950s—would develop sufficient interests in the peace process to be willing to make major compromises in their claims.

However, as anyone who has studied "history" should know, when vital national interests, developed over centuries, are at stake, five years of tenuous coex-

istence (mixed with waves of terrorism) are not going to lead to basic changes.

Other Israeli leaders might have played the issue differently, but a Labor-led government under Rabin, Peres or Barak would have been faced with civil conflict and divisions that would have weakened the Israeli position even further.

So where does this leave us? First, with the knowledge that new elections or a national unity government will not end the confrontation with the Palestinians and Arab world over these central issues.

If a more united government can be formed—and it's highly unlikely—Israel may become stronger, more able to face the orchestrated protests and pressures from the rest of the world. But the substance of the conflicts will remain the same.

So there is little choice but to ride out this storm.

When this crisis wave ends, if the toll in terms of violence and terror rises no higher, a new effort can be made to reconcile Israel's requirements regarding Jerusalem and boundaries with more realistic Palestinian aspirations.

But there is little reason to hope that these critical issues can be discussed, under any circumstances, without threats, crises, and pressure.

The writer is a senior research associate at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University.

Holy, whole, and wholehearted

JOSEF BURG

would remain in Israel's hands.

At the same time, I could not rid myself of the impression that neither the US nor Egypt were greatly interested in creating a Palestinian state.

I had often publicly invited Jordan to participate in our meetings, but without any result. My guess was that Jordan too, for reasons of its own, was uninterested in a Palestinian state.

When the discussion on Jerusalem becomes double-talk, we Jews have to set the record straight

In our talks with the Egyptians, the question of Jerusalem almost never came up—certainly not in any political tug-of-war. I was sure that our Egyptian partners in the negotiations fully understood that for us Jerusalem was not only a matter of the heart, but also the heart of the matter.

There was never a Palestine as an Arab state, and therefore there was also never a Jerusalem as the capital of an Arab state. The only time during the last 2,000 years that Jerusalem was a capital city was after the Crusade which started in 1096; Jerusalem was conquered in 1099 by Godfrey de Bouillon, and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem founded.

Once, in Blair House with US representative Sol Linowitz and Egyptian General Ali, the general asked me: "Why do you need Jerusalem as a political capital? After all, it is a city holy to the three monotheistic religions."

My answer was that I well knew this fact, and could also cite the exact date Jerusalem began being a holy city for us Jews: It was

around the year 1000 BCE. Surely, I said, Jerusalem became holy for the Arabs not before 637 CE, when they conquered Palestine.

I responded in the same vein during a meeting at the White House with president Carter, prime minister Menachem Begin, and the autonomy committee. When Carter started to exert pressure concerning Jerusalem, Begin

answered by restating that Jerusalem would remain indivisible. I mentioned the fact that Jerusalem is cited in the Bible 656 times, and in the Koran not once. I said "656 versus 0," and the matter was settled—at least for that meeting.

In 1980 president Reagan said Jerusalem would remain united, but its final status would have to be negotiated. I was then in New York. I reacted by commenting that having been in Prague in March 1939 when the Germans entered it, my Old World ears heard reverberations of Chamberlain's words about an honorable peace for our generation.

THE declaration that Jerusalem will be a united city whose final status still has to be negotiated is very close to double-talk. There's no question that the Old City represents a historic and unique unit with a concentration of sites holy to about 1,500 million believers of the three monotheistic religions.

For all of this holy area—holy and explosive—there should and can be found a special solution guaranteeing freedom of worship and internal administration for every creed and denomination.

This guarantee of freedom is for me not a simple declaration of words, but an obligation of values. We Jews are the classic example of a people that is a minority all over the world, and throughout the centuries. Here in Israel we are the majority, a singular fact that obliges us to avoid committing the sins committed against us.

We know from history that religious controversy can be very dreadful. Even now, at the end of the 20th century, we see the cruelty that ensues when religion and nationality are active and overlapping—in Ireland, Bosnia, and in Jerusalem.

But Jerusalem is the City of Peace, and must live up to its name.

The constant threats that we hear from the Arab side do not lead in the direction of a solution. Let them not forget that the famous Arab historian Tabari (839-923) reports the suggestion made to the Caliph Omar (634-44) that Moslem prayers be directed toward Jerusalem rather than toward the Ka'aba in Mecca.

Omar refused. Prayers, he said, must be in the direction of the Ka'aba.

We Jews must recall that in 1819 an antisemitic movement called Hep, Hep sprang up in Southern Germany. This name, which became a kind of battle cry against the Jews, derives from an acronym of the three Latin words: *Hierosolyma est peritida*, meaning "Jerusalem is lost."

It will never be lost again.

The writer, president of World Mizrachi, was longtime leader of the National Religious Party.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

QUALIFICATIONS TO LEAD

Sir, I agree with Alice Shalvi's article "Joy, But the Battle Goes On" (March 7) that there must be an ongoing effort to improve the status of women in Israeli society. But I question whether or not Ms. Shalvi is the appropriate person to be leading that effort. In an interview with *The Jerusalem Post* on July 25, 1986, Ms. Shalvi asserted: "As far as interpersonal relations are concerned, they took a turn for the worse, I remember, in the early 1950s when the Moroccan immigration began. Until that point, there wasn't any violence. But the North Africans really pulled knives." As a woman of Moroccan origin, I take offense at Ms. Shalvi's attempt to falsely blame North African Jewry for the introduction of violence to Israeli society. Her statements smack of racism and suggest that she does not regard Moroccan Jewish women as the equals of their Ashkenazi sisters. Until Ms. Shalvi publicly apologizes for her remarks, many of us will continue to doubt her qualifications to lead the Israeli women's movement.

DINA ATTIAS
Beit Shemesh.

Alice Shalvi responds: The interview in *The Jerusalem Post* which Ms. Attias so vividly recalls unfortunately omitted my explanation of the violence, namely the anger and frustration felt by immigrants from the Arab countries, who found themselves treated as second-class citizens, their culture despised and their centuries-old traditions vilified and ridiculed. Pace Ms. Attias, I do not think I have any reason to apologize. She should learn to check facts with the primary source before venturing to respond, particularly, if the response is as accusatory as hers.

ENTERTAINING

Sir, This letter is long overdue. For years I've been enjoying Adina Hoffman's humorous, biting film reviews and would like to thank her. I never see movies, but—judging from her critiques—the films themselves don't provide anything as consistently entertaining as her witty, light-hearted columns.

SARAH SHAPIRO
Jerusalem.

SOMETHING RIGHT

Sir, If the whole world is angry at us, we must be doing something right. The world usually applauds Israel, when Israel is dismembering itself.

L. BEAME
Jerusalem.

Sir, In its advertisements *The Jerusalem Post*, the *Cameo Theater* describes its production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* as a "hysterical love triangle between a man, woman and teenage boy." This is just nonsense; it is difficult to believe that whoever drafted this description ever read or saw the play. There are two "love interests" in the play. First, there is the delicate and restrained triangle Orsino, Viola, Olivia, which is between a man, a woman and a woman disguised as a man. It would be a distortion to describe this part of the

SECULAR MAJORITY

Sir, According to Ruth Dran's letter, "Orthodoxy" (March 2), being a Jew is synonymous to being Orthodox.

However, if a Jew becomes an atheist or an agnostic he does not stop being Jewish. As a matter of fact, the majority of Jews are secular.

Therefore, if a person decides to become a Jew, it is not logical that he should be forced to join the small minority of Orthodox instead of becoming a member of the majority.

DR. JACOB ROSIN
Netanya.

LOVE TRIANGLE

The other part centers on the deception of Malvolio, which could be described as "hysterical" but is not part of any "love triangle."

The only teenage boy in the cast is Viola's brother Sebastian, who doesn't conduct any love affair at all—he just accepts the beautiful heiress Olivia when she throws herself at him at the end of the play.

Such nonsense as the advertisement can only damage the reputation of the theater.

MISHA LOUVISH
Jerusalem.

SIMPLE ADDITION

Sir, The reason that we often find mistakes in our bank accounts is becoming clearer. When I went to school and learned simple addition and subtraction we were taught that four and one-half minus half makes four, but according to the bank workers union this would make five. Surely if the bankers and the union were really interested in giving the clients a five-day service instead of four-and-one-half days

as at present, the solution seems so very simple: let the branches be open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday both mornings and evenings, open on Friday till noon and then re-open on Sunday afternoon between 4 and 6 p.m. Thus, the clients will have a five day service and the bank workers will have an uninterrupted two day week-end.

EMANUEL FISCHER
Jerusalem.

NORWAY HAS the world's highest incidence of depression related to winter, a psychologist said. More than 20 percent of Norwegians suffer depression and related symptoms during winter, but the rate can reach up to 77 percent in some parts of the far north, according to Arne Holte, psychology professor at Norway's Tromsø University. Between 5 and 10 percent were so seriously affected that they required treatment.

"Norway provides the best laboratory in the world for such an investigation," Holte said. Psychiatrists say the condition disrupts the lives of millions of unwitting sufferers from North America to Australia. Winters in Norway are long and hard and inhabitants in northern regions are shrouded in darkness 24 hours a day from late November to the end of January. In the summer between May and July, the sun does not set.

HUMORISTS HAVE been forbidden from poking fun at the president and other senior officials in Christmas and New Year programs broadcast on state television in Albania. "No humor about the president, the prime minister, the government, the speaker of the parliament and television will be allowed in the year-end program," said the order.

The decision was reminiscent of

Communist times, when public humor was limited to low-ranking local officials. Filip Cakulli, one of the humorists working for the government, said he considered the order absurd. "We wouldn't have made fun of the president like they do in the United States, but some little jokes would not harm anyone," he said, adding the "dangerous" jokes had already been taken out of the program.

When silence is golden

MOSHE ZAK

King Hussein feels offended, perhaps rightly. He asked Israel, as a gesture, if he could pilot Yasser Arafat from Amman to Dehania, the Palestinians' airfield at Rafiah, whose operation is now being negotiated with the Palestinians. Israel said no.

Hussein has long been trying to show the Palestinians that his relationship with us can benefit them too - that they couldn't, in fact, do better than rely on his good offices and influence in negotiating a settlement to the conflict.

Flying Arafat to Dehania in his own Tristar would have been a fine demonstration of Jordanian influence. As it was, Israel left the king facing the Palestinians with egg on his face, which understandably angered him considerably.

It's not the first time this sort of thing has happened. Back in January, when he was shuttling between Gaza and Tel Aviv facilitating the Hebron agreement, Hussein asked us if he could land at Dehania, and met with refusal. So he flew by helicopter to Arafat's offices in Gaza instead.

The difference then was that the Palestinians knew nothing about it. Hussein's credibility wasn't undermined - on the contrary, his efforts to bring about the Hebron agreement were crowned with success.

This week was very different; this time, the air corridor through which the king had planned to carry the Palestinians regally, under his wings, suddenly dropped out of the sky.

Hussein didn't know that Netanyahu might have said yes had not the defense minister and the whole defense establishment objected, wary of creating the precedent of using Dehania before security arrangements were in place.

However, there was a precedent last June.

Just before the change of government, a Moroccan plane carrying medical equipment, food and milk landed at Dehania. The

defense establishment opposed that landing too, but prime minister Peres opted for a one-time gesture to Morocco.

This time, in following the recommendation of his security experts, Netanyahu sowed anger and resentment in Amman, leading to the exchange of letters this week between a hurt king and a "baffled" prime minister.

But Hussein didn't retaliate in

The last thing either Israel or Jordan needs right now is a public quarrel

any concrete way. He didn't recall his ambassador, or even cancel an official invitation to our defense minister for talks on security and strategic cooperation.

It was to show the Palestinians that he wasn't part of any Har Homa "conspiracy" with Israel that the king wrote, so sternly to Netanyahu, sending a copy to the Palestinians - who leaked it 24 hours before it was officially released in Amman.

The letter was a sort of Valium pill for the Palestinians, meant to calm them down, to assure them that the king remains faithful to Arab solidarity.

ANYONE who sees this as a new development in Israeli-Jordanian relations is mistaken. For years King Hussein has stated - and he said it again this week - that there must be peace between the descendants of Abraham, but that there is also Arab unity, to which all Arab leaders subscribe.

This is the setting in which Israel must promote relations with its neighbor on the east bank of the river. Our special relationship does not mandate concessions to the king at the expense of vital Israeli

interests, but it does require the occasional display of generosity.

While avoiding any impression that there is an Israeli conspiracy with the king over building at Har Homa, we cannot go too far in the opposite direction and allow Jordan to think it can dictate Palestinian conditions either on Har Homa, or on the extent of the first stage of withdrawal.

Jordan has every right to demand that Israel explain anything regarding the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem; that right stems from the peace treaty. But Israel needn't justify building in Jerusalem, or take refuge in the claim that coalition pressures forced Netanyahu to go ahead.

It's hard for the king to fathom that a leader cannot impose his views on his public; that was clear from his letter.

There was nothing much wrong with Netanyahu's response, but he would have done better to hold his horses. And his strident verbal comments were simply superfluous.

Far better to draw the moral and take every precaution to see that no aircraft lands at Dehania today or tomorrow under the umbrella of the international congress in Gaza. The airfield must not become the next stop on an Israeli-Palestinian collision course.

Hussein wrote that he feared further bloodshed, and in this he was sincere.

Over the years, prompted by his own need for a stable kingdom, he has worked to free the region from war. He will thus do what he can to cool the flames of this new Israeli-Palestinian crisis. Too much public criticism of Israel could stir tensions and lead to further incidents of the kind we witnessed yesterday at Naharayim.

The last thing Israel and Jordan needs right now is an unnecessary quarrel. It serves neither country's interests.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.



Security and support build peace

JANE HARMAN

I spent an intense few days in Israel last month, on a trip sponsored by AIPAC's American Israel Education foundation, meeting with Israel's political and security leadership and visiting Israeli defense and industrial facilities across the country.

I came away with a renewed sense of Israel's dedication to pursuing peace with its neighbors, of its desire to renew negotiations with Syria and Lebanon, and to seek an equitable solution in its negotiations with the Palestinians.

However, while Israel ardently pursues peace it is clear that it faces enhanced security threats today and the prospect of growing threats in the future.

Defense Minister Mordechai outlined many of these threats. He pointed to ongoing terrorism from Lebanon, to the growth of conventional military forces in the Middle East, and to the stunning development of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them throughout the region.

Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and others today have in their possession, or are developing, the means to suddenly annihilate large portions of Israel's population with biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons. These developments could easily continue even if Israel reaches a comprehensive peace with its immediate neighbors.

As a member of the National Security Committee, it is fascinating for me to observe the difference between the way our media in the US relates to peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and to peace in other parts of the world.

In Europe, we focus on security issues like NATO expansion, in the hope that we can perfect structures that will preserve peace in an unstable world.

In the Persian Gulf, we spend most of our time thinking about Gulf security, about American force presence and other means that will deter war.

But for too many thinkers, the Arab-Israeli conflict is more like a fairy tale. Once peace comes, the parties are expected to live happily ever after.

But life is not like a fairy tale. A stable peace in the Middle East will depend upon a stable security environment based on the interests of each of the parties, and a strong Israeli military establishment.

There is no doubt in my mind that we would not have come as far as we have in the peace process today if Israel had not demonstrated to the Arab world that it would risk more than it could accomplish by war.

With the Hebron agreement,

missile missiles that will shoot down Scuds like those that hit Israel and Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. Congress provides funding for Israel's Arrow missile program, which not only will help defend Israel, but will help defend American forces deployed in the Middle East.

The US and Israel are also developing an advanced Tactical High Energy Laser, designed to destroy Katyusha rockets like those

cooperation between our countries in addressing new regional threats.

As a strong supporter of Israel who feels the need for Israel's security not only in my head but also in my heart, I came away dedicated to doing my best to make sure that the cooperative projects that come before my committees are robustly funded.

In this way, the US and Israel can best address the challenges of the post-Cold War era, so Israel can be secure while it takes difficult risks for peace, and America's security interest can be enhanced.

During my final day in Israel, I visited Yitzhak Rabin's gravesite, and recalled how this brave warrior was one of the key architects of a vibrant US-Israel relationship.

Rabin, who kept the title of defense minister while he also served as prime minister, saw clearly the dynamic relationship between security and peace. His sober vision should ground us as we move forward.

The writer is a US Congresswoman who serves on the House National Security and Intelligence Committees.

Let's remove the rose-colored glasses. The Arab-Israeli conflict is no fairy tale

Israel's government has demonstrated conclusively that it will keep its commitments and push the peace process forward. Plans are already under way for further redeployments in the West Bank and for the commencement of final status negotiations concerning the toughest issues dividing Israelis and Palestinians.

But true peace depends on security - both in Israel's relations with its Arab neighbors and in the US-Israel alliance. The US must steadfastly support Israel as it works its way toward peace in this tumultuous era. We need to pursue this role because of our vital interests in the Middle East - including our commitment to Israel, the only real democracy in the region.

Because of efforts to balance the federal budget, foreign assistance generally is likely to decline in the coming years, and aid to Israel may also be challenged.

Though many are not aware of it, the US also helps to bolster Israel by joint cooperative projects between the two countries' military establishments. These projects not only help Israel develop the means to defend itself, but translate directly into improved weapons systems for our own forces here in the US.

Israel is America's most important partner in developing theater missile defense systems - the anti-

launched from Lebanon on an ongoing basis. And Israel and America are developing new technologies such as Boost Phase Intercept, that will enable them to shoot down hostile missiles over enemy territory shortly after launch.

As a member of the House National Security and Intelligence Committees, I came away from Israel heartened by the strong

Fixers and wreckers

ALLAN E. SHAPIRO

If it works, don't fix it! In one important respect, the law for direct election of the prime minister is working exactly as planned.

The worse the coalition crisis, the better the new law looks. The Hebron deal and the continuation of the execution of the Oslo agreements would have been impossible under the former system.

The stability built into the new mode of election has reduced the power of coalition extremists. They cannot unseat the prime minister, unless - under the law as it now stands - they are prepared to risk their own seats in the Knesset as well. Hence the proposal to change the law and eliminate this linkage.

The proposal comes from both sides of the political divide. On the right, there are schemes to replace Netanyahu with a leader who will put an end to Oslo. On the left, there is the hope of a Labor-led majority coalition in the present Knesset. On both sides, there are potent forces - Ariel Sharon and Shimon Peres - who see the proposed change in the law as guaranteeing the creation of a national unity government.

Here it is hard to tell the fixers from the wreckers. These new reformers are willing to accept the Knesset as it is. That is, they are prepared to accept all the damage the direct election of the prime minister has wrought on our political system. This is the paradox of the reform proposal - it kills the one feature of the new system that really works as designed, while retaining all the negative elements that have debilitated the party system, the parliament, and the government.

The new law has weakened both major parties. It has encouraged the growth of splinter groups, including the religious parties and two ethnic factions - Shas, the Sephardi haredi party, and the third largest in the Knesset, and Sharnsky's Yisrael Ba'Aliyah, based on newcomers from the former Soviet Union. It has fragmented both the nation and the Knesset.

At the same time, it has driven

a wedge between the prime minister and the coalition he leads. The role of the government has changed from that of a forum where decisions are made to that of a forum that ratifies decisions made by the prime minister and his personal advisers. No wonder this government leaks like a sieve. Leaks are a form of infighting that take the battle, via the media, to a wider arena.

Sometimes the infighting is out in the open. A good example is the obstructive action of Justice Minister Tzvi Hanegbi in the Knesset to kill the government-supported effort of Finance

The paradox of the election reform proposal: It kills the one good thing in the new system and keeps the rest

Minister Dan Meridor to shorten the term of the Israel Electric Corporation's monopoly.

The "fighting family" of Herut, born in the pre-independence underground, has come to signify not togetherness but domestic violence.

Clearly there is a strong case for change, perhaps repeal, of the direct election law. However, the present movement for change - in both political camps - is marked by one of the characteristic failures of our political culture. Constitutional politics collapse into partisan politics.

NO wonder basic laws, the building blocks of our constitutional facade, are enacted just like ordinary laws and in the same forum, the party-structured Knesset.

No wonder there is no demand for a constituent assembly truly independent of the Knesset. (The one elected after independence readily transformed itself into the First Knesset.) No wonder the present proposal for reform of the direct election law reflects the

outcome of partisan, not constitutional, considerations.

Ehud Barak, the odds-on favorite for future Labor leadership, has declared in a campaign brochure that "the direct election of the prime minister puts to the test our constitutional system and the regime in Israel." He has called for "an examination, from experience and perspective, of the influence of the method on the parliamentary system and on the relations between the three branches."

This is precisely what is needed. It is precisely what cannot possibly be achieved if the forum for decision is the Knesset. There must be another way.

A possibility worth considering is the creation of a judicial commission of investigation.

Typically this has been the mechanism for fixing responsibility for disasters, like the Yom Kippur War mishaps, the rigging of the stocks of the leading banks, the Machpela Cave massacre, and the Rabin assassination. However, in the case of health care, a judicial commission of investigation was the vehicle that examined a national problem. Some of its proposals were the basis for the national health insurance law.

One advantage of the judicial commission is that its members are chosen by the president of the Supreme Court. This in itself provides the necessary insulation from partisan influence.

Since the direct election of the prime minister goes to the heart of popular sovereignty in Israel, the people should have the final say. Therefore, the proposals of the commission should be submitted directly to the people for ratification by referendum, rather than to the government and the Knesset.

The writer is a legal and political commentator.

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Albania asks Europe for help

News agencies

THE HAGUE — The European Union is seriously considering a request from the Albanian government to provide military assistance to Tirana to restore order, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo said yesterday.

"As far as I am concerned all options are open and the request deserves serious consideration," he told Dutch television.

Albanian President Sali Berisha and all political parties called yesterday for NATO's European members to provide the military assistance "to restore the constitutional order and to preserve the country's integrity."

Van Mierlo, who visited Albania last weekend for emergency talks with Berisha, had earlier telephoned EU colleagues, including Germany's Klaus Kinkel, British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind and Italy's Lamberto Dini, to discuss possible options to deal with the crisis.

Albania slid further towards anarchy yesterday as gunfire crackled around the capital Tirana and authorities closed the main airport after a nearby military base was looted.

Italy and Albania also asked the UN Security Council yesterday for an urgent meeting to consider the crisis as it spread nationwide.

The requests were made separately by the Albanian and Italian missions to the United Nations in a letter to the current council president, Zbigniew Wlosowicz of Poland.

"Upon instructions from my government... I have the honor to request you to convene an urgent meeting of the Security Council for the purpose of considering the situation in Albania," Albanian

Ambassador Pellumb Kulla said in his letter.

UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said the Italians had also requested a council meeting. He also said the Albanian ambassador to the United Nations met Secretary-General Kofi Annan to brief him on the deteriorating situation in his country.

Such requests are usually circulated among the 15 council members, who decide by consensus when and if they will honor the request.

In Brussels, the Western European Union (WEU), the EU's fledgling defence arm, said it had received no request from Albania to provide military assistance to restore order to the troubled Balkan country.

"There has been no formal approach," said one source at the Brussels headquarters of the organization. He added that the mechanism for such an approach did not exist, but Berisha could ask NATO's European allies individually to intervene.

Meanwhile, NATO ambassadors were reported to have met in informal session to draft a statement calling for an end to violence and political dialogue.

Both the EU and NATO have called for support for efforts by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to defuse the crisis.

Military analysts said the WEU, which was revamped only a few years ago, had neither the will nor the operational capacity at present to conduct a major military intervention.

"Technically, only WEU members can call for a WEU operation."

Members who want to be involved could of course call for it to be done under the auspices of the WEU, but at the moment that is most doubtful," said one military source.



An Albanian rebel carries a handful of weapons delivered from a supply truck.

(AP)

Arrest made in Cosby murder

LOS ANGELES (AP) — One man is under arrest and two other people were being questioned yesterday in the shooting death of the son of popular entertainer Bill Cosby.

The arrest resulted from a tip that "a Russian gang member" was involved, said the editor of a popular tabloid, the *National Enquirer*.

Prosecutors are expected to file murder charges against the suspect soon, police Chief Willie Williams told a late-night news conference. He said the two others are a man and a woman.

When the arrest was made in the San Fernando Valley, investigators seized evidence linking the man to the roadside killing of Ennis Cosby on Jan. 16, Williams said. He would not elaborate. He did not give the man's name, but said he is believed to be a Los Angeles resident.

"We're not releasing any information on the reasons why (the arrest was made) at this time, but we are very comfortable, based on our work with the district attorney," Williams said.

The death of Cosby, 27, a doctoral candidate in special education at Columbia University, prompted a huge public outpouring of sympathy, and hundreds of calls offering tips to police.

The elder Cosby is the star of the television show *Cosby*. A tipster interested in the *National Enquirer's* \$100,000 reward offer was a key to solving the murder, tabloid editor Steve Coz said yesterday.

"We got a call on our Cosby reward tip line in January, within days of the killing," Coz said. "It was a tip that a Russian gang member was involved in the slaying."

"Normally it would have sounded like some nut — the Russian mob?" Coz said. "But this guy sounded so credible, we began to pursue it. We started investigating the Russian mob in L.A."

He said the man, who provided an *Enquirer* reporter with a pager number, told the paper "his friend heard point blank that he heard a Russian gang member say, 'I shot

a black boy.'" He said his paper gave the pager number and name to police.

Police wouldn't comment on Coz's account.

Coz said the tipster helped police find the gun by showing the area a few km from the crime scene where it had been dumped.

It was eventually recovered after a thorough search of the area. Ballistics experts identified the gun as the weapon used to kill Ennis Cosby, the *Daily News* of New York reported yesterday.

In a statement issued through their Los Angeles publicist, the Cosby family thanked the LAPD. "We realize how tough it must have been on them every day."

"We felt certain and had every hope that they would find the suspect and that the process of jurisprudence would unfold," the statement said.

Cosby spokesman David Brokaw told the *Today* show this morning that the Cosbys showed "a real sense of triumph, exuberance and something along the lines of some sort of closure."

Nigerian workers seize foreign hostages

LAGOS (Reuters) — Delicate negotiations were in progress yesterday to try to free 20 foreigners held hostage on a barge by Nigerians demanding work, officials of the company at the centre of the crisis said.

"We are still talking. It is very delicate negotiations," said an official of the French oil contracting firm ETPM, which is going through its second hostage-taking in Nigeria since December.

The hostages are 16 Frenchmen, three Britons and an American working for ETPM. They are held on company barge DLBI by about 70 local people demanding employment.

Other sources said the locals,

some of whom also work for ETPM, wanted better conditions of services.

Western diplomats from the nations involved said the hostages had not been harmed.

"We didn't get any information that the hostages are in bad shape so we think they are reasonably all right," one said.

ETPM went through a similar crisis last Christmas when 28 of its foreign workers including 10 Filipinos and nine Frenchmen were held on a barge offshore by 60 Nigerian workers demanding higher wages.

Apart from being deprived of food for two of the five days they were held captive, the hostages

were not harmed.

The latest crisis began when the local workers seized the barge with the foreigners on board offshore in the Escravos area off the midwestern oil coastal town of Warri.

The barge beached yesterday near Warri, Lagos diplomats said.

The French embassy in Lagos was in touch with ETPM and monitoring the negotiations going

on between the French company and the villagers on the situation, they said.

French company Lyonnaise des Eaux-Dumez said in Paris that ETPM was a joint venture between it and McDermott International Inc.

ETPM spokeswoman in Paris, Ariane Malzac, told a French television the problem was linked to rivalries between local groups.

Banker swindles \$25m. for husband

BRUSSELS (AP) — In one of the biggest fraud cases in Belgian banking history, an executive of Credit Lyonnais Belgium swindled the bank out of 850 million francs (\$25 million), the bank said yesterday.

CLB General Manager Philippe Cloes said Daisy Ragolle, an executive of the bank's branch in Ghent, and her husband, businessman Laurent Demey, were both arrested in connection with the case.

"We traced the transfers to her husband's accounts and companies belonging to him in Belgium and abroad," Cloes said in a telephone interview.

"She did it for love, for her husband," he said. The two lived separately.

He said Ragolle, 50, who had been with the bank for 30 years, used her position as controller of regional transactions to embezzle funds through foreign exchange and treasury transactions.

"She knew exactly what to do,"

Cloes said. "We had a great deal of confidence in her. The biggest amounts were over the last few months." The case came to light when other banks started noticing unusual transactions and warned CMB.

The bank took action Tuesday and an internal audit team confronted her with the accusations. The police came in to make the arrest.

Demey is chairman of Waregem soccer club, once one of Belgium's most celebrated teams now languishing in the second division. Demey also owns a road construction company, industrial bakeries and several hotels in French and Swiss ski resorts.

CLB said many of the bank accounts where the money ended up have been blocked. He stressed the bank as such would not suffer financially.

"We are in the process of recuperating most of it," Cloes said, adding that insurance would cover the rest.

One hurt in Paris store explosion

PARIS (AP) — A package bomb exploded in a store in central Paris yesterday, slightly injuring the owner and causing minor damage.

The package was thrown into a home decoration store on Paris's Left Bank, an area popular with tourists. It did not cause a fire.

A police source said someone threw a package through the store's window at around 2 p.m., and the bomb exploded after the owner picked it up to throw it out of the store.

The bomb injured the owner's eyes and face, but his condition was not serious, said the source.

who spoke on customary anonymity.

There were conflicting accounts from witnesses.

Jerome Ertola, who was at a cash machine at a bank next door to the store, said he saw a man in a beige raincoat in front of the store.

Ertola said he heard a "thud," saw smoke coming from the store and the man in the raincoat running down a side street.

Then the injured man staggered out of the store, he said.

"He was bloodied on the face, neck and fingers," Ertola said.

Tories 24 points below Labor

LONDON (AP) — An opinion poll published yesterday put the Conservative Party 24 points behind the Labor Party, underlining the government's failure to recover popularity as national elections loom.

The poll by Opinion Research Business for London's *Evening Standard* put Labor on 53 percent support, the Conservatives 29 percent, and the Liberal Democratic Party 12 percent.

Labor was up two points from ORB's survey a month ago, and the Conservatives were down three points.

The poll was in line with other recent soundings which suggest Prime Minister John Major's government is headed for the biggest defeat since Labor won a landslide victory after World War II in 1945.

On the second yearzeit of our beloved
Rabbi Dr. LOUIS BERNSTEIN
we will gather at the Eretz Hachaim Cemetery on
Wednesday, March 19 (10 Adar II) at 9 a.m.
The Family

In deep sorrow we mourn the passing of our beloved
mother, grandmother and great-grandmother
MILLIE GLEICHER ז"ל
Gleicher and Knoll Families

The Azkara in loving memory of
SYLVIA BERNSTEIN ז"ל and GAIL BELKIN ז"ל
will be held at the Herzliya Cemetery on Thursday, March 20, 1997, at 1:30 p.m.
The Bernstein, Butchins, Geshen and Belkin Families

The tombstone in loving memory of
MAX SEGAL ז"ל
(formerly of Dublin)
will be unveiled ז"ל on Sunday, March 16 (7 Adar II, 5757)
at Har Hamenuchot, Givat Shaul, at 3:30 p.m.
We will meet at the main gate at 3:15 p.m.
The Family

On the occasion of the 20th yearzeit of the passing of our
beloved Rebbe
Rav PINKY BAK ז"ל
a memorial service will be held at the Eretz Hachaim
Cemetery, Beit Shemesh, in the chapel, at 8 p.m.,
Thursday, March 20, 1997, Motza'ei Ta'anit Esther,
followed by an *aliyah lakever*.
Akiva Bak will be with us.
His Students and Friends

With deep sorrow we announce the death of my beloved
husband, our dear father, grandfather, and brother
SAM COLTHOF ז"ל
Wife: Ineke
Daughter: Esther Muskat and husband, Rehovot
Son: Jacob Colthof and wife, Jerusalem
Sister: Eva Philipson, Jerusalem
and their families.
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מכרז מן האכל

The Jerusalem Post
Friday, March 14, 1997

NEWSin FOCUS

Netanyahu's precarious balancing act

Mutual distrust and an inability to please all of the people all of the time appear to be the stalling factors in the peace process, David Makovsky writes.

At one moment during a dreary, post-midnight negotiating session a couple months ago where only Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, and a translator were together in a room, sources say Netanyahu looked at Arafat and said, as if he had just had an epiphany, "the problem is, you don't trust me!"

Arafat, who until that point had been using an Arabic translator, blurted out in English: "Yes, that is right."

While some ministers sought to put King Hussein on the defensive after yesterday's bloody attack at Naharayim, the substance of the monarch's letter to Netanyahu included one undeniable truth: "Can any worthwhile relationship thrive in the absence of mutual respect and trust?"

Yet, whenever Netanyahu is asked about trust between himself and Arafat, the prime minister prefers to brush aside this issue and speak instead of "mutual interests."

Nobody is expecting that an entire peace process will be based solely upon trust, since there are deeper underlying forces at work. However, at a time of crisis, like this week, the lack of any personal or even limited trust is crucial since it seems to deprive Israelis and Palestinians of an intimate top-level channel through which to defuse tensions.

Last week, Arafat complained to American Jewish leaders in a private session in New York that, in contrast to Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, Netanyahu does not call him regularly. This week, now that Netanyahu wants to speak to Arafat, it is the Palestinian leader who is not pick-

ing up the phone.

The issue of trust has been thrust to the forefront due to the dual nature of negotiations, namely negotiating both with a peace partner and, in a sense, negotiating simultaneously with constituents. Netanyahu has been seeking to bring Likud supporters along the peace path by trying to balance every step towards the Palestinians with a step towards his own people. One day pull back 9 percent from the territories; and another day build Har Homa.

Netanyahu proudly acknowledges in discussion with Americans and Palestinians that

"The problem is, you don't trust me," said Netanyahu.
Arafat replied: "Yes, that is right."

he is the only Israeli leader who can bring 90 percent of Israelis to support the peace process. Yet, the price Netanyahu pays for this consensus is a lack of trust by the other side. Arafat assumes that Netanyahu will take unilateral action at his expense, wherever possible, in order to satisfy a domestic audience.

In other words, without trust, it seems that it is impossible to ever bridge the differences between these two parallel negotiations

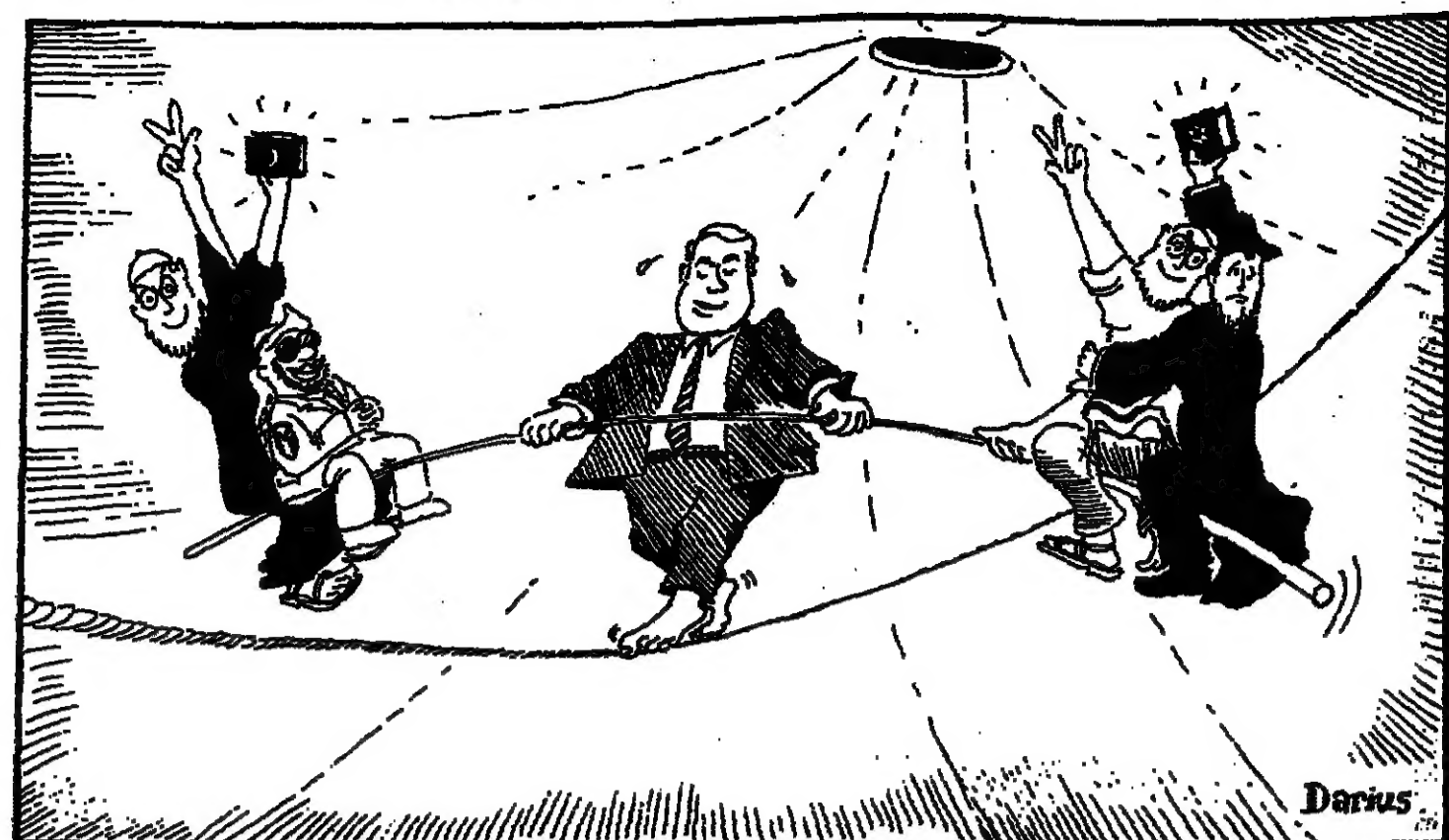
since the peace partner will always suspect the worst.

This sense of half-heartedness has also extracted an international price. As Labor MK Shimon Peres said this week: "The price of consensus is Israel's isolation in the region and in the world."

Netanyahu is certainly not the only person negotiating while always looking over his shoulder. This week, Arafat released leading Hamas militant Ibrahim Maqadmeh just after he convened a unity conference involving Hamas's participation. So on one hand, Arafat can also feel satisfied that he is enlarging the peace tent by having Hamas take part in consultations, but in a similar vein to Netanyahu, the cost for this consensus could come at the other side's expense.

The irony is that while each leader wants the other to recognize his own domestic constraints, he quickly minimizes the domestic constraints of the other. For example, while Netanyahu asks Arafat to recognize Israeli domestic constraints, the prime minister said he does not believe that the Palestinians will have "any spontaneous reaction" to Har Homa. In a press conference in Moscow, Netanyahu made clear that he did not see the Palestinian public as a factor in the equation since the only relevant question was whether Arafat wants violence or not.

Moreover, King Hussein, who is very worried that violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank will spill over and affect his own public, minimized Netanyahu's domestic problems. He wrote to Netanyahu this week, "I frankly cannot accept your repeated excuse of having to act the way



you do under great duress and pressure."

WHILE Netanyahu uses domestic constraints in his conversations with Arab leaders, the question remains how long will Netanyahu and other Arab leaders be able to maneuver between the requirements of the peace process and satisfying their constituents.

On one hand, there is no doubt that Netanyahu has broadened domestic support for the peace process. Support for the peace process among Israelis, hovering at about 50 percent during the Labor period, has increased to over 70 percent, and support for meetings with Arafat is at over 80 percent. In a broad sense, Netanyahu's embrace of Oslo, however reluctant, coupled with Likud MK Michael Eitan's joint

final-status principles with Labor MK Yossi Beilin, has meant that the fault of Israeli politics no longer runs between Labor and Likud, but through the Likud party.

It was only a few months ago that people were wondering whether Netanyahu was an ideologue who wanted no negotiations with Arafat at all. Now it is widely acknowledged that Netanyahu heads the pragmatic wing of the Likud and the question is not whether he supports the peace process but whether he needs to take some supplementary unilateral actions that will make the peace process more palatable to his supporters.

Yet, as Netanyahu goes down the road to Oslo, he cannot expect to base his coalition upon the parliamentary support from those

ideologues whose entire self-image is based upon their opposition to Oslo such as MKs Ze'ev (Benny) Begin and Uzi Landau. Furthermore, Netanyahu will not be able to satisfy them because a future partition of the West Bank becomes clearer with every successive pullback, and Netanyahu's room to maneuver by taking counterbalancing steps proves to be harder.

Before Oslo, during the intifada, Israel could act unilaterally since it felt it had little to lose. It could bomb PLO headquarters in Tunisia, deport 400 Hamas leaders and toss them onto a hilltop in Lebanon. In 1997, its room to maneuver has shrunk dramatically. But at the same time, its citizens are not being blown up on buses or chasing youths in Nabhus's cashbah.

Peres said Labor was successful in building Jerusalem without causing the Security Council and General Assembly to denounce Israel. But this too occurred in a pre-Oslo mode, and constructing Har Homa is one of the last elements of the "ring" around Jerusalem is happening in a totally different political environment from the building of Ramot or Gilo.

Netanyahu is correct that there is nothing in the Oslo agreements which forbids Israel to build in Jerusalem, but people in the international community ask how such construction reconciles itself with the spirit of Oslo, namely Israel's commitment to negotiate the future status of the city in talks that are supposed to conclude in

Continued on Page 20

Not getting the message across

Israel's ambassador to the US is the first to admit that the embassy's public relations campaign could stand some improving. Hillel Kuttler reports from Washington on what's gone wrong.



Israel's ambassador to the US, Elyahu Ben-Elissar (Israel Sun)

On Israel's public-relations front, Ambassador Elyahu Ben-Elissar's tenure in Washington might seem a nightmare gone bad. He's been challenged almost since his arrival, six months ago. From the Western Wall Tunnel episode last September to the current Har Homa/further redeployment/PA offices/Gaza conference quadruple-whammy, Ben-Elissar has faced a stream of difficulties.

Some American-based Israeli diplomats complain that Ben-Elissar is not plugged in to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and that they are consequently at a disadvantage in the US, leaving a gaping hole in getting Israel's message out. They cite last week's triumphant visit to Washington by PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, who popped up on American interview programs while Ben-Elissar was back in Israel and unavailable for rebuttal.

Ben-Elissar is also said to harbor suspicions and mistrust of holdover embassy officials that has fed perceptions of him navigating a rudderless ship.

An official at the American

Public Affairs Committee asserts that Netanyahu's decision last week to close down the four PA offices again highlights the shortcomings of Jerusalem's failure to dispense adequate information to Washington.

"The story of the four PA offices: Who knew what? Where? When?" he asks.

When the response comes that it remains unknown which offices were ordered closed, the official exclaims: "Right! That's a classic example of what I'm talking about."

Ben-Elissar volunteers that "there is no doubt whatsoever" that the embassy's public relations

campaign could stand some improving, that his efforts and

those of other embassy officials and consuls general have not suc-

ceeded.

However, even critics state that any of Ben-Elissar's shortcomings must be seen against the backdrop of the lingering Netanyahu-David Levy feud, which has limited access to the party line and corroded Israel's ability to stand up for itself in the US. From that perspective, Ben-Elissar is fighting a battle with one hand tied behind his back.

But, Ben-Elissar maintains, he is "absolutely in the picture" and speaks every day with the Foreign Ministry and when necessary with Netanyahu's office, including many Fridays with the prime minister directly. "I won't be kept [out of] the picture. Nothing should be construed as circumventing me. It's not being done. I'm not worried about it," he says.

On the one hand, Ben-Elissar insists that he is "absolutely" proactive in getting Israel's message out, while on the other maintaining that the most influential American communications outlets - CNN, The Washington Post and

The New York Times - continue to exhibit a "basic bias" against Israel that dooms the effort.

"It's a biased press. They are one-track-minded. Not all of the American press, but some very important media organs, channels,

So how does Israel make its case? Ben-Elissar scratches his head, lifts his arm and shrugs.

papers, have one single goal on the Israeli-Palestinian track and that's to bring back Israel to the pre-1967 borders. If The Washington Post will repeatedly write 'the historically Arab east Jerusalem,' this means they want

Jerusalem to be divided - period!

"It's obvious. Look, CNN calling Arafat president in the news while the official language of the US [administration] is chairman, not president, this is already, of course, preempting. We're always being blamed, always being accused. So as long as this will be the case, it's very difficult of course, to fight against it. I'd say that I am satisfied as long as this exists - no, I won't be satisfied and I will do whatever I can to change it."

Har Homa is "actually the best example of unfairness," Ben-Elissar says. "It's hard to fight unfairness, it's hard to fight dishonesty."

"Everybody knows that this is not a new settlement, in the sense of settlements in the West Bank or Gaza... It's actually a new housing neighborhood. Everybody knows it."

So how does Israel make its case? Ben-Elissar scratches his head, lifts his left arm and shrugs.

Continued on Page 20

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A different view of Oslo

Palestinian chief negotiator
Saeb Erekat tells Jon Immanuel
that Palestinians feel humiliated
by Israel's unilateral decision-making

Behind the cries of "deceit" and "lies," few know what the Oslo accords actually have to say about the issues which have aroused the current furor concerning redeployment. Yet Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian chief negotiator on the issue, says it's there in black and white if only Israel would look. Further redeployment is to be from Area C only. Therefore, he asserts, the redeployment is a fraud. Quoting from Oslo 2, Art. XIII:8, he notes that further redeployment (FRD) is from Area C and transfer of internal security responsibility (ISR) to the Palestinian police in Areas B and C will be carried out in three phases.

This, Erekat says, is explicit. "Further redeployment is from Area C because further redeployment involves territorial transfer. There is no territorial transfer from B to A. That is how Mr. Netanyahu is trying to deceive us."

In his redeployment offer, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave the Palestinians 7 percent from Area B and 2% from Area C. On the Israeli side, Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein counseled the government that the Oslo accords required a withdrawal from Area C but he did not say that a change of status from Area B to Area A did not count. And the US State Department made no distinction at all when it suggested a 10% redeployment.

Erekat admits that the demand for a 30% first phase redeployment was not realistic. "It's not specified how much the percentage is, but at least it should be 2%." The 30% figure represented one-third of 90% of the West Bank which Palestinians hope to control by the end of the third phase of FRD in

August 1998. To back that hope, Erekat quotes from the Oslo agreement, Art. XVII: 2a. *The territorial jurisdiction of the (Palestinian Council) shall encompass... Area C, which except for the issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations, will be gradually transferred to Palestinian jurisdiction in three phases.*

The statement, says Erekat, suggests that what should be left in Israeli hands after phase three is an "issue" like military locations, Jerusalem and settlements, rather than a great expanse of territory. Furthermore, he says, the Oslo Declaration of Principles (DOP) does not mention territory, but only borders, as an "issue" for permanent status talks.

"If we say that the PA jurisdiction over the West Bank covers West Bank territory except for permanent status issues like Jerusalem and settlements, I don't think Mr. Netanyahu should go to and tell [Yisrael Ba'aliya] chief [Natan] Shtrasky and the Ma'adai [National Religious Party] 40 days ago that it would be an insignificant transfer from C to B. They poisoned the atmosphere," he said.

Then there is Art. XVII:8. *The first phase of the redeployment (prior to March 1996) will cover populated areas in the West Bank... Since Area A and Area B are the populated areas of the West Bank, it again follows that "deployment to area B is in phase one, therefore further redeployment must refer to area C,"* Erekat says.

He cites more support in Art. XIII:2a. Before March 1996, *There will be a complete redeployment of Israeli military forces from Area B.* "If redeployment from



Saeb Erekat: "The redeployment is a fraud."

(David Rubinger)

Area B was completed more than a year ago how can we have a further redeployment from Area B today?" he asks.

Still, if Israel has withdrawn even from only 2% of Area C and no percentage of land to be transferred is specified in the Oslo agreement, then it has exercised a lawful first phase FRD. It might have to withdraw from 88% in the next two phases in order to redeploy to "specified military locations," but Oslo surely permits Israel to decide unilaterally. No, says Erekat. "I would like to tell Mr. Levy that they are trying to make peace with all the coalition members and then come in a humiliating fashion to dictate to us. That's totally unfair."

The issue of a unilateral decision is an anomaly considering that almost everything else in the Oslo agreement emphasizes cooperation and coordination. Erekat argues that Oslo simply does not permit unilateral decisions. He says that it does not mention a unilateral decision, although in the case of FRD it does not mention negotiations either. The Oslo DOP Art. XIII uses the same kind of language to describe the first phase withdrawal from Palestinian towns, when there were negotiations, as it does to describe FRD.

Nevertheless lawyer Joel Singer, who phrased the Oslo accords, insists that a unilateral decision was intended and that it was understood by everyone involved. Netanyahu believes he has tried to steer a middle course, opening tunnels and closing PA offices, and making non-territorial concessions like freeing women prisoners and relaxing the closure to improve the atmosphere.

If the decision to build on Har Homa was a commitment to Israel's self-declared sovereignty in Jerusalem, and was expected to anger Palestinians, it follows that Netanyahu expected the FRD, his first territorial concession after Hebron, to be welcomed by the Palestinians. However, instead of balancing the expected anger over Har Homa it has made it worse, because of what appears to be a shortfall in territory. As former prime minister Shimon Peres said on Israel Radio on Wednesday, "It

However, Oslo itself does make the distinction. The frame of reference is 242 as interpreted by Israel. Erekat admits that Israel never accepted that Jerusalem had the same status as the West Bank but, he says, Oslo includes the right of Palestinians in Jerusalem to vote in Palestinian council elections.

Perhaps in truth Har Homa is less an Oslo violation than an issue which personifies the limitations of Oslo to many Palestinian supporters of the peace process, and the argument over its interpretation might tear it apart. Har Homa is more visible from Bethlehem than Kiryat Arba is from Hebron. When building starts on Har Homa thousands of Palestinians currently basking in Area A, shielded from Israeli rule and even shielded from a view of Jerusalem, will witness daily a tree-draped hill changing into a building site, then into houses, then into a self-contained Israeli township. It will become a visible symbol of Israeli territorial encroachment on what they historically consider to be part of Bethlehem.

"The minute the bulldozers go up [Har Homa] I think God only knows the consequences of what will happen," says Erekat. He wondered at the Israeli warnings that it will encounter violence with force, while it refuses to encounter the Palestinians in a civilized debate over the provisions of the Oslo accords. "They are treating us like s***, as people to whom they can dictate what is good for them," he says, in a sudden explosion of invective. "But the last thing we want to see happen is violence, that's the truth."

"The minute the bulldozers go up [Har Homa] God only knows the consequences."

is one thing to zigzag, but his zig does not match his zags."

Har Homa touches the issue of both settlements and Jerusalem. Since it is inside the Israeli municipal boundaries of Jerusalem Israel does not consider it a settlement. But, says Erekat, the frame of reference for the Oslo agreements in the preamble to Oslo 2 is UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which calls for "withdrawal without delay by the parties to the conflict of their forces from territories occupied by them." It does not distinguish between the West Bank and the areas of Jerusalem occupied in 1967.

ANALYSIS

Crisis cycle

Barry Rubin sees the latest tensions in Palestinian-Israeli relations as part of a predictable pattern.

The course of the Israel-Palestinian peace process would be comical if it were not so potentially tragic.

In just 10 months we have already gone through four cycles of alternating crisis and celebration: the aftermath of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's election, the opening of the Western Wall Tunnel exit and ensuing violence, the Hebron talks, and now the Har Homa/first redeployment crisis. Each of them has followed a remarkably similar pattern.

Each time, foreign governments and media proclaim the death of negotiations and the imminence of catastrophe, with Israel being to blame. Every time, Netanyahu makes concessions, less than Palestinians wanted but more than was previously thought possible or the prime minister's right-wing supporters thought advisable.

Afterward, there is international rejoicing at how the peace process was saved at the last minute. The funniest part is how politicians and journalists abroad have faced each phase in a state of total amnesia, forgetting what has gone before or what is to come after. They have had a most difficult time learning that both sides are simply playing a very tough game of bargaining, showing a willingness to go to the brink in order to obtain more or yield less.

It should be quite clear by now that Netanyahu and Arafat desperately want to avoid wrecking the process. They are moved not by fear of foreign pressure but from a need to justify their own leadership and prove they can deliver benefits to constituents.

Netanyahu must show he is bringing peace with security; Arafat must demonstrate that he is advancing toward a Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem.

A collapse of negotiations would reveal their total failure. Given the political balance of forces, Netanyahu would be replaced by those arguing that both peace and security require more concessions to the Palestinians (i.e., the Labor Party); while Arafat might be shoved aside by those decrying his whole peace policy as a mistake (i.e., Hamas and other militants).

While unrestrained violence would be costly for both sides, Israel would certainly be able to flatten Arafat's incipient state, wiping out all the Palestinian gains of the last five years. For Arafat in particular, a recourse to large-scale fighting is dangerous - a little terrorism might be useful but too much would be suicidal - and would play into the hands of both his Palestinian rivals and Israeli hardliners. By abandoning the Oslo process, the Palestinians would lose their Western backing without gaining much real help from Arab states.

Moreover, Arafat's goal is not to blow up the peace process but to gain greater advantage within that framework. After all, when the Palestinians protest so much about the amount of land they gained in the first Israeli withdrawal as insufficient, the object

is to get much more in the second and third round. While the Israeli disadvantage is that its tough bargaining is internationally considered as illegitimate, the Palestinians' problem is that they are by far the weaker partner and have little direct leverage over Israel.

Current Palestinian tactics are based on two considerations: their own weakness and the Netanyahu government's stated aims.

First, the fact that Palestinian assets are quite limited makes Arafat's cries of complaint and plea for international intervention all the more passionate.

But aside from violence, he has relatively little recourse aside from words.

Another approach would be for the Palestinians to make concessions in order to get more from Israel, the kind of give-and-take bargaining usually associated with negotiations. But this points to the second, underlying, problem. A Labor party government in Israel might say that it would agree to a Palestinian state and some kind of arrangement regarding Jerusalem if the Palestinians would meet a whole series of Israeli demands over territorial compromise, Jerusalem, security arrangements and so on. But Arafat knows that Netanyahu opposes a Palestinian state, any concessions over Jerusalem or giving up any significant territory currently held by Jewish settlements.

To make matters worse from the Palestinian viewpoint, they see that the prime minister faces intensive pressure from within his coalition to give up even less than he is willing to do. Each issue, then, is fought in the context of the long-term - actually only two years - perspective of the final settlement. Thus, Har Homa does not signify merely building a few thousand apartments to meet housing needs - quite legal under the Oslo agreements - but is designed to close a ring of Jewish communities around eastern Jerusalem so Israel need never yield any control over the Palestinian neighborhoods there.

Israel's deciding to give up only 9 percent of the West Bank in the first round of withdrawals - a unilateral choice legal under the Oslo accords and recently reconfirmed as such by the US - means that the Netanyahu government intends to retain control over most of that territory and to block the emergence of any Palestinian state.

So, this present crisis, as with past ones, will pass. Perhaps international criticism and Netanyahu's need to keep the process going will encourage some steps pleasing to the Palestinians over the Gaza airport, West Bank-Gaza passage, prisoner releases, or other matters. Then, for a few weeks, Netanyahu will be hailed as a pragmatic statesman again.

In the end, there will be only one crisis that really counts: if and when the Palestinians conclude that they cannot get a final settlement that meets their minimal requirements. The good news is that this is still two years off. The bad news is that it gets closer each day.

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Karmeit Tzur

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

A pastoral landscape surrounds the homes of Karmeit Tzur. On a weekday, the only sounds are the shouts of the settlement's children at play. But the calm is deceptive. This hilltop community, between Beit Umar and Halhoul, fears that the upcoming redeployment putting the Palestinian Authority on its doorstep will eventually lead to its total isolation.

What happens to Karmeit Tzur — and the Samaria community of Yitzhar, similarly affected by the pullback — may provide a hint of what other settlements outside the main blocs can expect as the interim agreement with the Palestinians is implemented. The problem for the 70 families of Karmeit Tzur is that no plan has been formulated for the future of their community.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai relieved the most immediate worry this week. He gave a verbal guarantee that the access road leading to the settlement from Highway 60, the Halhoul bypass, would remain under Israeli control. But he left unanswered their demand for alternative access: a seven-kilometer arc of highway from the Etzion Bloc that would skirt Palestinian localities and join Route 60.

Some of the residents questioned the government's intention regarding the remaining two phases in the interim agreement; others view their current status as temporary.

"No one knows the complete picture regarding the interim agreement," says Esti Uliel, one of the settlement's activists. "When talks began about the Phase I pullback, there were rumors that the areas surrounding Karmeit Tzur and our entrance road would be transferred to the complete control of the Palestinian Authority."

Two weeks ago, the residents formed an action committee which intensively lobbied the Knesset and cabinet members. The campaign succeeded in winning Mordechai's promise regarding the current access road; however, Uliel stressed that the battle

would not be over until the seven-kilometer road is built.

"It was authorized by the previous government," Uliel says, adding that the stretch would bypass the neighboring village of Beit Umar and the El-Arub refugee camp, linking up to Highway 60.

Another isolated community for which Route 60 is an increasingly important lifeline is Yitzhar, just outside Nablus. The 60 families there, like Karmeit Tzur's, will be surrounded by villages becoming Area B — civil administration by the Palestinians, security control by Israel — in the upcoming redeployment.

Yitzhar, a 10-minute drive from Joseph's Tomb, has been assured that the long access road linking it to Route 60 will remain Area C, administered solely by Israel.

"We are not so concerned about our situation but more worried about the future of other settlements in Judea and Samaria," settlement secretary Rafael Miron says.

Yehudit Tayar, spokeswoman for the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, agrees: "What we are concerned about is the shrinking of the white [Israeli administered] areas and the yellow and brown [PA] areas that are growing larger."

The council now intends to have more input into decisions regarding future pullbacks to prevent settlements from being cut off, Tayar says.

"People don't talk of peace anymore. Instead, they talk of peace of mind."

BUT FREE access is not the settlers' primary concern; security is.

Their reasons were highlighted by this week's attack on the IDF guard at the entrance of Teneh Omarin, a settlement just across the Green Line

from Beersheba. It is in an area without Arab villages, but the attackers apparently fled to Dhahiriya, due to come under complete PA control in the redeployment. Had the incident occurred afterwards, the IDF would not have been able to pursue the attackers, even in coordination with the PA.

Mordechai, in a meeting Wednesday with settlement leaders, said that in light of the attack,

Karmeit Tzur, a religious settlement in Judea, and Na'ama, a secular community in the Jordan Valley, have little in common. But with the upcoming redeployment, Karmeit Tzur may well become like Na'ama: an isolated enclave surrounded by Palestinian-ruled territory.



he agreed that their security concerns demanded a response, according to Tayar.

Settlers say they are constantly given reason to worry. "Stones are thrown at our cars daily," Uliel says of the drive along Karmeit Tzur's access road.

Resident Shmuel Gillis, spending the day on guard duty, agrees. "The school buses are stoned almost daily," he says. "Just recently, the front window of one of the buses was shattered by a stone. My daughter, who was sitting in the front seat, was covered with glass, but luckily she wasn't injured." Gillis added that an IDF jeep accompanies all buses to and from the settlement.

That is little consolation to Nurit Rashi, a mother of four, who says, "Until the children return home from school, I am never completely at ease."

"Once the road is completed, it will make such a difference," Uliel says. "Do you know how easy it will be to get to Beersheba from here?"

Uliel emphasizes the importance of linking up settlements to main arteries. "People who view settlements as enclosed communities, surrounded by barbed wire and tanks, are making a mistake," she says. "Settlements must expand and grow like any other community."

RAHEL OFER, a mother of eight and one of the settlement's founding members, is concerned

Continued on Page 20

Na'ama

By HERB KEINON

Liora Hasson sits in her living room in the Jordan Valley settlement of Na'ama, tears welling up in her eyes. She is torn. Torn between what she wants, and what she has. Between the way she would like things to be, and the way they are turning out. The Oslo Accords have placed Hasson in internal turmoil, constantly pulling her in opposite directions. The turmoil is evident when talking to her about the political situation. It's evident in her body language, in her tears, in the contradictions in her words. Hasson would love to stay in Na'ama forever, but has no illusions. She wants to give the peace process a chance, but is angry at the way it is being carried out. She wants to build for her future, but since Na'ama was left surrounded by the Palestinian autonomous area, she doesn't know where that future will be.

One of Hasson's neighbors, Anna Maller, is supervising work in a warehouse in Na'ama's agricultural area, as a number of Thai workers sift through and package bunches of fresh basil for export. The mixed smell of a variety of herbs provide the concrete structure with a background odor befitting a pizza parlor. Maller isn't upset by the turmoil that afflicts Hasson. The peace process is good, she says. That the government doesn't give more real assistance to the farmers in the valley is bad. It is also an indication that there is little intention of keeping the region as a civilian area.

Yet Maller is happy, upbeat. The family's business exporting herbs is — finally — turning a profit. She'll do it as long as she can. And when the time comes, she'll leave. She, too, doesn't believe Na'ama — or for that matter the entire Jordan Valley — has much of a future. "Nobody has done anything to ensure that there is a future here," Maller says. "If they had wanted a future, somebody would have made sure that Na'ama has 2,500 families, not 27. We are 27 families, between 15,000 people in Jericho, and 5,000 in Oujia. There is no 'population card' to play here. What are we talking about. Jews love to talk, but when it comes to actions..."

NA'AMA WAS the first Israeli settlement "to go," so to speak. Not bulldozed down, Yamit style, or handed over to the Palestinians, like the Civil Administration complex in Hebron. First to go in the sense that it was the first settlement surrounded by Area A, the brown areas on the Oslo Accord maps that symbolize Autonomous Palestine. When Israel carries through with the next stage of withdrawal, Karmeit Tzur, sandwiched between Beit Umar and Halhoul, may be in a situation similar to Na'ama. Similar, but not the same.

Whereas Jericho has throughout the years been known as a "quiet"

area, the same cannot be said of Halhoul. The bottom line, Hasson says, is that her settlement, indeed all settlements that are enclaves inside Palestinian autonomous zones, are doomed. Her advice for the Karmeit Tzur families: "Take a deep breath, be more aware of what is happening around you, and give it a chance. Be able to say that you tried. Don't become hysterical already. If I would have taken this advice, I would have saved myself some sleepless nights."

WHEN AUTONOMY came to the Jordan Valley in May 1994, Na'ama had 27 families. Four years later it has the same 27 families. The reason no one left is because to do so would entail taking a huge financial loss. Property there, according to Hasson, head of the settlement's absorption committee, is worth nothing. And the reason nobody has joined is simple: who wants to live in an enclave? The exception, she says, are the national religious, some of whom are fired by ideology. They are now willing to go and live in places like Kfar Darom and Netzarim, which are also enclaves.

But Na'ama is not a religious settlement. As word began to filter out of talks between Palestinian and Israelis in 1994 that the Gaza/Jericho First plan included

Oujia, just north of Jericho, and a corridor linking the two towns, not a few people in Na'ama — and the Jordan Valley — panicked. This arrangement would mean that they would be surrounded by the Palestinian Authority on three sides, and hedged in by the Jordan River on the other. Back then, the peace process was the Great Unknown. Nobody knew exactly what would happen.

Not that today matters are so crystal clear, but there have developed certain rules to the game. Granted, the rules are often broken, but a certain pattern of behavior has developed. But in 1994, the thought that this tiny settlement would be surrounded by the Palestinian Authority led to many sleepless nights — and to not a few protests. "It is never good to live inside an enclave," says Hasson, 40, beginning a dialogue replete with the contradictions that reflect both the complexity of the situation, and her own turmoil. "In the meantime it is OK, there have been no physical casualties. There is always the concern that some nut will shoot at us from that masses will rush the settlement. I can't say that this never passes through my mind. That fear definitely exists. But life continues. The truth is, I expected things to be much worse."

What she expected were shootings on the bypass roads, or from cars passing in front of the settlement. These incidents did occur in September, but not in Jericho, rather in Gaza. The September riots kept Na'ama's residents locked in for five days, and the scenario remains unsettling, unnerving. It is a cause of concern now, especially because of threats of violence over Har Homa.

But on a day to day basis, Hasson says, life continues. Another piece of advice Hasson

Continued on Page 20

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MIDDLE ISRAEL



By AMOTZ ASA-EL

I wasn't long ago that Jerusalem's Shmuel Hanavi neighborhood epitomized what then was called Second Israel, namely those who remained disenfranchised while their Ashkenazi, secular, better-educated brethren basked in power, contacts and mammon.

As teenagers, we preferred to pass through its perennially angry *shikunim* in groups, feeling uneasy among the gangs, hookers and garbage piles which were part and parcel of that unsmiling landscape of urban decay.

Not that you were prone to get shot in the middle of the street — though that too had been known to happen there — but coming from well-to-do Rehavia we just felt like on another planet; Shmuel Hanavi was Israel's version of Algiers, Teheran's and Cairo's destitute casbahs, where hopeless, jobless and incitable youths formed the backbone of socio-religious movements which assaulted regimes whose secular nationalism had led most citizens nowhere.

This week, strolling down Shmuel Hanavi's Rehov Derech Eretz, I noticed the neighborhood had come a long way since my high-school days.

Physically, some of its endlessly elongated shoe-box buildings

have been coated with limestone walls and the areas between them are sprinkled with carousels, seesaws, swings and slides. Not that this face-lift has made the place more aesthetic — the gardenless buildings are still stained with rust, drowning in weeds, and wrapped in hanging laundry — but it is a bit more amicable.

Yet Shmuel Hanavi's real transformation is not in its physique, but in its spirit.

Just throw a glance at the kids returning from school shrouded in white shirts and wearing black kippot; listen to the Sephardi-accented Torah lecture bursting loudly from a tape recorder in a second-floor kitchen steaming with cookery for a multi-kindered family; fathom the billboard ad outside the local grocery store, where the public is invited to hear Rabbi Ben-Zion Motzafi eulogize Rabbi Shmuel Cohen; take a random look at the Biton, Masoud, Bosharian, Dahan, and Cahzan mailboxes adorning block 112, entrance 6, and you'll make no mistake about it: You've arrived in Shas land.

Fortunately, the neighborhood which was originally built on the fringes of the no-man's land which lay between Israel and Jordan, and then fettered as the no-man's land which loomed ominously between Israel's haves and have-nots, has finally found a landlord to call its own.

Unfortunately, his name is Aryeh Deri.

It is here, and in dozens of sim-

ilar pockets of misery across the country, that Israel's most effective political power broker has earned his mass following. It is in places like this that the young and vibrant movement he heads has set up its low-tuition kindergartens, schools and yeshivot, offering the kind of warmth the locals had so sorely lacked under a succession of socially aloof governments. And it's places like this to which Deri alludes when telling us that his prospective conviction would boost Shas's electoral prospects.

Surely, when juxtaposed with its traditional delinquent image, Shmuel Hanavi's transformation is a happy sight indeed. Even the most fanatic secularist would agree that religious encroachment is preferable to street crime. Surely, Middle Israel, which might otherwise resent religious politics, should welcome the social reparation of Lower Israel through Shas's efforts.

However, in its increasingly tragic and brazen attitude toward the law, the party's elected leadership seems intent on restoring in too many Israeli minds the old Shmuel Hanavi image.

With Deri up to his eyebrows in legal quagmire, with Rabbi Ovadia Yosef insisting that Deri continue to meddle in high politics while frequenting the courts, and with Shas leaders claiming that their spiritual mentor cannot even be asked to give police a technical testimony, Shas is risking losing the kind of secular sympathy which for the past 13

years has enabled it to cuddle cozily in a succession of left, right- and national-unity coalitions.

The beauty of it is that lifting Rabbi Ovadia Yosef above the law is halachically absurd, if not downright preposterous.

Yes, he is a great man, a tremendous scholar who stood up to the Ashkenazi arrogance of his old nemesis, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, and rejected his and others' attempts to impose their Greater-Israel fanaticism on Jewish law. Yet Jewish law — in Tractate *Sanhedrin* — has also ruled that only a king can neither judge nor be judged, while even the High Priest, which Rabbi Ovadia isn't and never will be, "can judge and be judged, can act as a witness, and others can bear witness against him."

A LITTLE more than two millennia ago, Judea's King Alexander Yannai — in a pivotal clash between religion and state — was summoned to testify in a case involving murder charges leveled against his slave. At stake was a lot more than an obscure servant's fate; Yannai sought the kind of absolute power non-Jewish contemporary rulers wielded, often by claiming they were themselves gods.

Shimon Ben-Shetah — a visionary scholar who instituted compulsory education, and a man of principles who did not even fear the ruthless king who once crucified 800 of his opponents while feasting in public with a bunch of whores — ordered Yannai: "Stand

on your feet and testify." Yet the shrewd ruler, knowing the rest of the rabbis at hand lacked their leader's guts, stared them in the eyes and demanded that they too all give him that order. As he expected, they all failed to rise to the occasion, sheepishly "fixing their eyes in the floor."

Apparently, various experiences of this sort led the sages to conclude that the best way to reach an accommodation with secular power is to keep the king neither above nor below, but aloof from the law. Surely, it was a tactical compromise rather than one of principle, one which nevertheless upheld that basic Jewish belief that only God is holy and that no man — even Moses and David, both of whom were resoundingly reprimanded and painfully punished for their very human sins — is above the law.

Religion is frequently torn between charisma and reason. That was often the difference between Catholics and Protestants, Shi'ites and Sunnis, or Hassidim and Mitnagdim. Now, with Sephardi Shas voters believing — like Catholics, Khomeinists and Hassidim — that their leaders are embodiments of righteousness, performers of miracles, and intermediaries between man and God, Jewish history is coming full circle, with religious rather than secular leaders purporting to be above the law.

It's time Rabbi Ovadia understood he is in bad company; if not Deri's, then Yannai's.

On Jewish Catholicism

A VIEW FROM NOV



By MOSHE KOHN

Our society degenerating into senility precisely as we approach what the talmudic Sage Rabbi Yehuda ben Teima defined as the age of *etzil counsel*, 50? (See *Pirkei Avot* 5:25.)

Have we lost our senses — our common sense, our sense of values, our sense of decency? Have we lost the understanding which, according to Rabbi Yehuda, we ought to have acquired when we turned 40? And will we, well before that jubilee in 5758/1998, have forfeited the ability to give ourselves or others the counsel that derives from understanding and drift into the 60th birthday's *zikhron* age?

Too many signs indicate, indeed, that we are all too soon sinking — rather: causing ourselves to sink — into what used to be called the dementia of old age, into national Alzheimer's.

There are several symptoms of this, one of which is the series of four posters recently plastered on the windows of bus shelters in Jerusalem promoting our national lottery, Mifal Hapayis (hereafter MH).

That series was one of the most outrageous demonstrations of advertising pornography I have ever seen, surpassing in their corruption those posters containing overexposed

thighs and cleavages that used to attract arsonists. I mean spiritual pornography and corruption.

Normally I don't read the bus-shelter posters, so it wasn't until a day or two before they were replaced at the end of February that I finally stopped to read those MH promos. At this writing, some of them were still running in the newspapers.

"I'm bummed (dejected)," says the tearful Israeli young woman in one poster. "My boyfriend has dumped me. I've been fired from my new job, law school has turned me down, and that trip abroad seems further than ever. What's left to live for? Oh, for the Mifal Hapayis grand prize!"

MH, a public institution headed by political appointees, justifiably boasts of its distribution of large sums of money for the construction and improvement of health, educational, cultural and other communal institutions.

At the same time, it also spends large sums on salaries, perquisites, severance pay and pensions for its staff, including its chairman. That post, a political plum, is now occupied by kibbutznik and former agriculture minister Avraham Katz-Oz, who was appointed by Labor just before its defeat last spring.

MH also wastes large sums on puerile advertising: What would you call, for example, Sefi Rivlin's promotion of the lottery by his moronic antics on television?

Then came this post-Zionist, post-Jewish advertising campaign.

A second poster in that series shows a smiling young Israeli woman, decked out in Indian fashion, in the lotus position, musing: "There's nothing like India — the flavors, the aromas, the people, the beaches. But like it or not, now I'm here, waitingress evenings, and in the morning dreaming of a house of my own with two horses on the grounds (plus a husband who won't be jealous of them). Oh, for the Mifal Hapayis grand prize!"

Then we have the musings of two young men.

One tells us: "After three years [of military service] on the northern border, give us a chance to have the time of our lives. What do I have in mind? Bungee jumping in New Zealand, an elephant safari in India, and the future waiting for me around the corner. I'll do it yet. Oh, for the Mifal Hapayis grand prize!"

The other man muses: "I've been through Amazon country, I've done the climb to Machu Picchu, I've been to the 'Land of Fire' [Tierra del Fuego]. Now I've got to think about the future. My dream is to set up a startup company and get on Wall Street pronto. Oh, for the Mifal Hapayis grand prize!"

What does this advertising tell us about MH's perception of the level of aspirations of our youth?

What does it tell us about that level of aspirations?

What does it tell us about what our schools are teaching our youth?

What does it tell us about what we parents, teachers, youth-group lead-

ers, army instructors and commanders, elected and appointed officials, and adults in general are teaching our youth in our preambles and especially in our conduct that is supposed to set them an example?

It suggests an egoistic Israeli youth detached from the past and the future, detached even from the human world about, high only on dreams of "doing my thing."

PERHAPS THE following episode tells something about the vision that guides MH.

A journalist interviewing Ekron Mayor Aryeh Haddad asked whether gambling in casinos was among his hobbies. Haddad told him no, he opposed all forms of gambling, including the MH games.

Katz-Oz promptly sent him a scathing letter, saying, "...Now that I know your attitude, I'll see to it that you are repaid in kind."

In a radio interview that followed, Katz-Oz "explained" at sarcastic great length that since MH distributes money to municipal institutions, municipality heads are obligated to help promote sales. He implied that people like Haddad, who accept those funds while denouncing gambling, are hypocrites (*Musaf Ha'aretz*, February 7).

Another symptom of our dementia: Several weeks ago the Finance Ministry announced its intention to authorize a second, Friday MH Loto drawing, in addition to the present Tuesday drawing. This

angered the chairman of the Sports Betting Council, Aryeh Zeif: "If the Loto holds a drawing on Friday and affects Thursday, the accepted Sportoto [soccer pool] day, we'll institute an additional game on Tuesday, which will hit the Loto. If it's war, then war it will be."

Incidentally, Israel's gamble an estimated NIS 5,500,000,000 annually, NIS 2.5 billion in the various MH and Toto games and NIS 36 in casinos here and abroad.

I confess that I have a standing order for a weekly deduction from my bank account for MH, and I also occasionally buy a Loto ticket.

I wonder if this puts me in the class of professional or habitual gamblers whom the talmudic Sages disqualify from giving testimony (*Mishna Sanhedrin* 3:3).

ONE MORE symptom of our degeneration: Recently, the Jewish National Fund's works committee arranged for 100 of that venerable institution's workers a day of fun and relaxation at a hotel in Bat Yam. The "fun" included a fashion show in which female models paraded undergarments, and then stripped into total nudity.

Some of the workers were offended and complained.

The JNF spokesman said the administration had had no hand in organizing that event. The works committee chairman said: "I don't know anything about any stripping. But even if they did, so what?" (*Yediot Aharnot*, February 23).

Voice of the totolotto

Dry Bones



FUNDS



By BEVERLY BLACK

The problems of poverty are easily and often overlooked. It is easy to avert eyes when passing beggars on the streets.

It is easier still to ignore poverty that flourishes beyond the tunnel vision of our unaffected lives. Fortunately, most of our readers are not directly affected by poverty and all its hideous pains. It is easy to overlook and yet the fact is, according to the government and voluntary bodies, more and more Israelis, particularly those with large families, are being pushed further and further down.

Children who go to bed hungry usually lack the supplementary facilities needed for a good education. They need books and magazines, extra lessons that will enable them to drag themselves out of the vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation.

An elderly immigrant from Russia needs dental treatment for his rotting teeth; an Ethiopian child needs extensive dental work; a mother of eight has no money to buy her children winter shoes; a new immigrant walks 8 kilometers to and from university each day in order to save bus fare. You can make a difference. You can help. You can give. You can do more.

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It's too easy to ignore poverty

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New Donations	Progress Totals
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\$335	\$14,902 (other currencies converted into shekels)

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NIS 300 Anon., J'm. NIS 100 In the name of Mrs. Lita Kandel of Tel Aviv. In loving memory of Melanie (5th Adar) — her brother and sister, Ramat Maghshim. In loving memory of my very dear parents, Madge and Sydney Haydn — Mrs. Doreen Mischon, London. Michael Heyman, J'm. Anon., Peth Tikvah. NIS 50 Mrs. R. Burgin, J'm. NIS 15 Thank you Susie Weiss of Mizrahe News (for the books) — Noa Rubin, Ma'ale Adomim. \$50 In honor of Neta Marx's bat mitzva and in honor of her family — from cousins Mei, Ely, Shieela, Jonathan, Ilana and David. \$40 Marcia Greenwald, Fair Lawn, NJ. \$25 Olga Umansky, Los Angeles, CA. \$15 Jane Flahkin, Philadelphia. \$50 Debra Moss, England.

New Donations	Progress Totals
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NIS 100 In loving memory of Melanie (5th Adar) — her brother and sister, Ramat Maghshim. NIS 50 Mrs. R. Burgin, J'm. \$25 Hilda Morgenstern, Teaneck, NJ.

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SHABBAT SHALOM



By SHLOMO RISKIN

"These are the accounts of the Sanctuary, the Sanctuary of the Testimony, as they were counted according to the commandment of Moses, for the work of the Levites by the hand of Itamar the son of Aaron the priest." (Ex. 3:21)

This week's portion of Pekudei, along with last week's Vayakhel, seems to be a repetition of Truma and Tetzaveh, read just three and four weeks ago respectively.

At the start of Truma, God says to Moses: "And let them make me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8). For the rest of this portion, as well as the next one, the Torah describes the Sanctuary and its contents, leaving virtually nothing to the imagination.

Then comes the "interruption" of the portion of Ki Tisa, with its recording of the sin of the golden calf, only to be followed by Vayakhel and Pekudei which represent a return to the details of

the Sanctuary. Here is an example from Tetzaveh: "And you shall make a breastplate of judgment the work of an artist, like the ephod. Make it out of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen you shall make it" (Ex. 28:15). And here is Pekudei: "And they made the breastplate of artistic work, of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen" (Ex. 39:8).

If there is a difference, it's that the first time around the Israelites are given the command, and the second time the Torah records that the command was indeed performed. But why does the Torah not choose not to deal with the whole event in a single all-inclusive verse: "And the Israelites built the Sanctuary exactly as God had commanded?" After all, every word of the Torah must be accounted for!

In order to understand the significance of the repetition, it is important to remember that the Almighty desires an intimate relationship between Himself and the people of Israel. We are commanded to build a Sanctuary in order that God and Israel might establish a common home.

But whoring after strange gods is a betrayal of the ideals given at Sinai. If the revelation is a marriage between God and Israel,

and the two stone tablets the marriage contract, then in effect the Israelites commit adultery with their worship of the golden calf.

Were God only a God of justice, this would be the end of the Jewish people, the sin mandating eternal divorce. But since God is also a God of compassion, He forgives.

But can we legitimately expect forgiveness for as heinous a crime as idolatry? Herein lies the true significance of the repetitions of each and every painstaking instruction regarding the Sanctuary. God plans His nuptial "home" with Israel before they sin, and accepts their construction even after they have sinned. The repetition is a confirmation that the intimacy between God and Israel has been restored. So great is the Divine capacity to forgive (much greater than that of humans) that He is able to start again from the beginning despite Israel's breach of trust.

Let me add a further proof. It is interesting to note that during the weeks we read the concluding portions from Exodus, the calendar is generally host to another sequence of special biblical selections: a special Torah scroll is removed from the Ark for this additional reading, followed by a special Haftara that preempts the usual reading from the Prophets.

The first of these is Shekalim

(last week), speaking of the obligation of every Jew to give a half-shekel to the Sanctuary. This represents an act of commitment, of pledge, of a covenantal relationship between God and Israel 4,000 years strong, demonstrated in our daily lives by the giving of our "half-shekels" to build our Torah academies, synagogues and outreach centers. Interestingly enough, financial commitment is also the traditional halachic form of betrothal; one may not profess love without understanding that financial responsibility is built into the marital relationship.

The second special Sabbath — next week, right before Purim — is Zachor: Remember to destroy the evil Amalek. Amalek is not only the power that would destroy us from without; it is also the winds of assimilation and self-destruction which would destroy us from within. When the Torah records how Amalek attacked the tired and the weak straggling from Egypt, it doesn't refer only to those who were physically vulnerable; it also includes the spiritually weak, those whose link to the chain of Israel had become inadequate and indifferent.

Amalek, who himself doesn't fear God, gains strength when Israel also ceases to fear God! The Shabbat of Zachor always

precedes Purim because back in Shushan there were two threats: Haman-Amalek-antisemite from without, and a nation steeped in the amnesia of assimilation from within.

After we remember the dangers of religious laxity and intermarriage, the next special Sabbath suggests the possibility of purification. We read of the red heifer, *para aduma*, whose healing ashes-with-water have the ability to purify even from death itself.

And finally the last special Sabbath in this sequence, Hahodesh, brings us toward a new beginning. *Hodesh*, the Hebrew word for month, is based upon the Hebrew *hadash* (new) and *hidush* (renewal). The moon is the symbol par excellence of our ability to emerge from total darkness to a state of fullness.

Thus the readings of Shekalim, Zachor, Para, and Hahodesh chart a journey that begins with commitment and love, stumbles through failure and sin, but ends with the possibility of purification and renewal; after all, there can be no greater example of freedom than the festival of Pessach, always two weeks after the Sabbath of Hahodesh, which expresses redemption from servitude and emergence from sin and alienation.

Shabbat Shalom

Beginning with commitment

THE WEEK THAT WAS

Business as usual in Tel Aviv

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

If the Shabbat wars in Jerusalem ebb and flow through Bar-Ilan Street, in Tel Aviv the symbol under which the secular faithful march is ... the cheeseburger.

Secular Jerusalemites look to the tireless Meretz councilman, Omer Yekutieli. Tel Avivians have businessman Omer Padan, the director and franchise owner of McDonald's in Israel.

In Jerusalem the battle is over ideology, in Tel Aviv it's mostly business, with a bit of principle thrown in for seasoning.

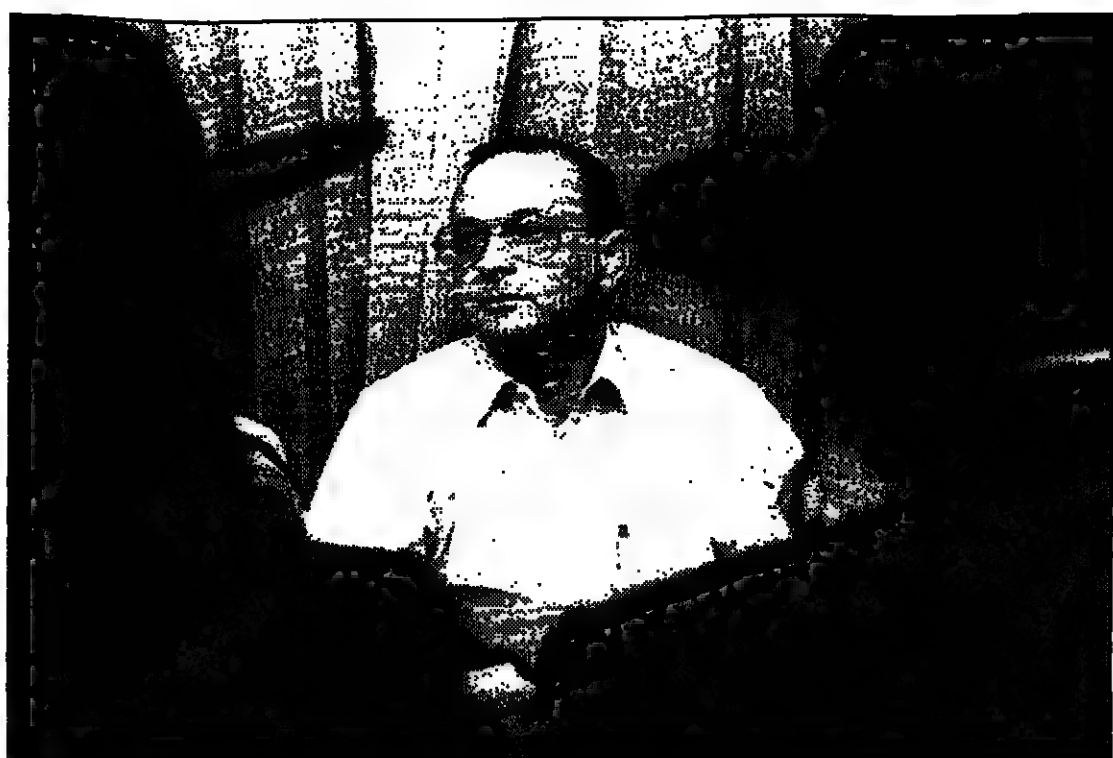
The philosophical question debated by Tel Aviv's '90s intellectual is whether the city shall have cheeseburger on Shabbat or not.

Padan has been waging a steadfast war against the attempts of the Labor Ministry to close down McDonald's outlets across the country on Shabbat. Since restaurants are permitted to open on Shabbat, the ministry employs other means. It dispatches Druse inspectors to check the religious identity of the teenagers employed in McDonald's.

If they're Jewish, the ministry can threaten them with charges on the basis of a 1951 law that forbids Jewish boys and girls from working on Shabbat.

Padan thinks teenagers working weekends to earn pocket money or supplement the family income "is a good thing."

In Zichron Ya'acov antique dealers "sell" their businesses to an Arab every Friday and "buy" them back again Saturday night, thus operating



Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo is ready to confront the haredim over the Ramat Aviv mall. (Scoop 80)

their shops legally during Shabbat. It has been suggested Padan's workers could "convert" to Islam every weekend.

Padan's contract has a provision allowing him to operate on Shabbat the McDonald's branch in the Ramat Aviv mall now being built, if other shops are also open. Israel Theaters has a contract to run five cinemas

there, including weekends. When Padan and Israel Theaters signed their contracts with mall owners Africa-Israel, they did not imagine the company would soon be acquired by haredi tycoon Lev Leviev and that he would decide the mall should be closed on Shabbat.

Padan says McDonald's business doubles on weekends. In fact, he

avers, "it's not worth operating any fast-food business at all unless you can open weekends."

"That's what the public wants. These places are part of the Israeli family's weekend entertainment just as it is for American and European families."

Israel Theaters invested some \$2 million in the mall project and says

likewise that no public entertainment venture makes sense without weekends. "Imagine if the Disney Worlds had to close 52 Sundays and a dozen holy days a year," said one cinema manager. "It's nonsense begging for bankruptcy in the modern world. People work hard all week and demand full leisure services when they have a day off."

In Tel Aviv Padan certainly is fighting no lone battle. Mayor Ronni Milo called for a shoppers' boycott of the mall unless it operates on Shabbat and provides family entertainment and fast food. His deputy, Dan Darin, said the city would reject Africa-Israel's requests for extended building permits if it intends to close the mall on weekends.

Public lobbying is being led by Free People (Am Hofshi), an association of professors, lawyers and prominent Ramat Aviv residents. Parliamentarians Avraham Ravitz and Moshe Gafni, of Degel HaTorah, lodged police complaints against Darin for "threats" and "abuse of power," saying that opening the mall on Shabbat would be a breach of the work and rest law.

Meanwhile, the McDonald's ad featuring sizzling yellow cheese melting over a giant burger is still being broadcast on Channel 2, despite demands from religious quarters that it be taken off.



Hagit Konstantini, restaurant coordinator at the Tel Aviv Hilton, welcomes Greek singer Demis Russos to the hotel. (Shaul Rahamim)

GRAPEVINE

Greek dream come true

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

Although she is the niece of popular singer Mickey Gavrielov there is a more internationally celebrated singer of Greek melodies whom Hagit Konstantini, restaurant coordinator at the Tel Aviv Hilton, has long admired and was dying to meet. This week she had her chance when Demis Russos arrived here to perform at the Miss Israel 1997 contest. Like most visiting entertainment stars, Russos was accommodated at the Hilton. Aware that Konstantini's family originates from Greece, the hotel management selected her to present Russos with a welcoming bouquet. It was almost as good as winning the lottery.

IN AN unusual social mix, haredim and secularists this week put aside their differences, and in a united effort opened their hearts and pockets for the sake of a cause that benefits all segments of society. The nation's captains of industry and commerce turned out in impressive numbers at the Tel Aviv Hilton to celebrate Ezer Mizion's 18th anniversary.

Headquartered in Bnei Brak, this miracle-working, person-to-person organization of 7,000 volunteers reaches out to the sick, the elderly and their families, providing meals, medical and rehabilitation equipment, blood donors, household help, ambulances, accommodation and other services almost entirely free of charge.

In addition to paying NIS 500 per head to attend the gala dinner, several of the 500 guests made on-the-spot contributions or purchased items from close to half a million shekels worth of exquisitely fashioned silver objects donated by the Mardiger family which owns HaZorim, the international silver crafting chain. Even Health Minister Yehoshua Matza got into the spirit of giving and transferred NIS 100,000 from the financially strapped Health Ministry.

Ra'anana Mayor Ze'ev Bieleski, who had to leave early, deposited NIS 1,000 at the door, setting a precedent for other guests who had to slip out before the festivities were over. One of them, businessman Sammy Mastawi, pledged NIS 150,000 to cover the cost of an ambulance.

When the evening started, Ezer Mizion had 16 ambulances at its disposal. By midnight the fleet had increased to 20. Among the other ambulance donors were Africa Israel's controlling force Lev Leviev and his wife Olga. Altogether, proceeds from contributions and silver sales came to NIS 1.55 million.

Auctioneer Meni Pe'er was effectively assisted by shipping and real-estate magnate Yuli Ofer, who made the opening bid for several of the silver items - and consistently bid high. Pe'er made extensive use of gematria to coax more money out of the crowd, while Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau used an acronym to describe the true Jewish attitude to charity.

The letters in *zohav* (gold), he said,

stand for *zeh hanoten b'seter* (he who gives in secret).

WHILE MOST of the guests who accepted the Ezer Mizion invitation came with generous intentions, what really moved them to tears and greater largess was the courage of Bar Yam high schooler Tammy Majar, who though disabled by cancer is not afraid to use the big C word and is determined to triumph over her personal adversity. Mounting the stage with the aid of crutches, she stole the show from Pe'er who was so choked up by her well-articulated optimism, that he gladly stepped out of the limelight.

THERE SEEMS to be some fertile magic about Channel 2. Mickey Haimovitz and Oshrat Kotler conceived their first offspring not long after joining the station, and now it's Elmat Elmat's turn to wait for the stork. The timing was perfect since her Friday evening entertainment show is nearing the end of its season.

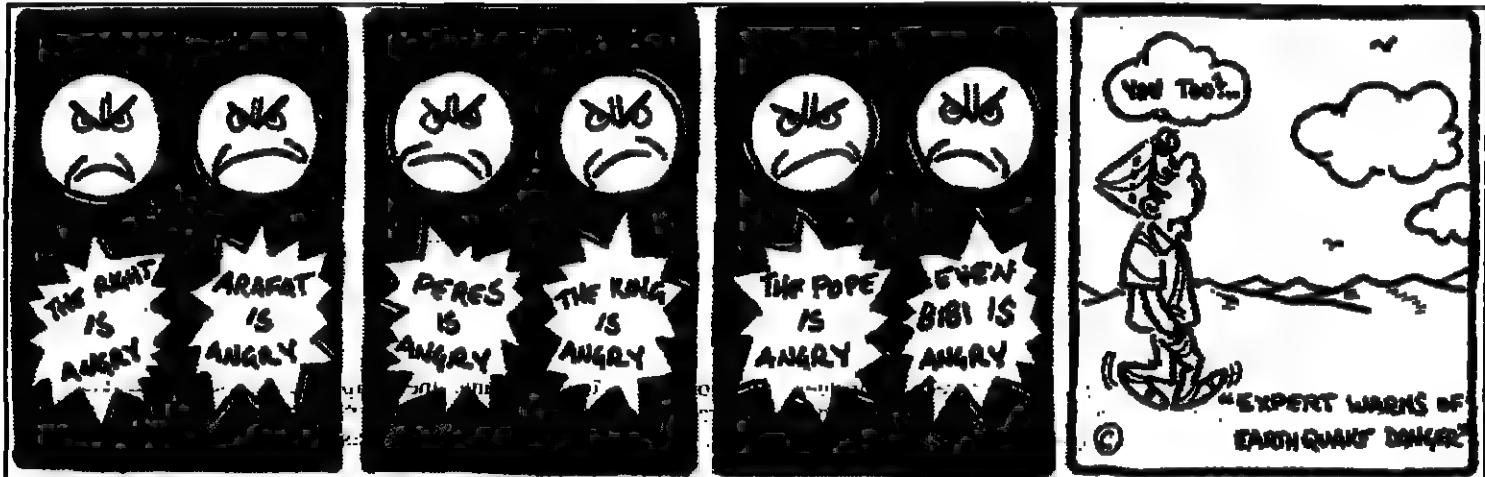
AMONG THE respondents to *The Jerusalem Post* Circulation Department's "Be a Winner" contest was retired milliner Hannah Siedner, who wrote that she and her husband Ernest had been subscribers to the paper since 1935. "I am 85 years old," she wrote, "and my husband is 92 years young." When interviewed by the *Post* this week, Siedner confirmed that one of the first things they had done after arriving here in 1935 as refugees from Nazi Germany was to take out a subscription to the *Post*. They've been faithful subscribers ever since. Siedner had been a medical student when the Nazis came to power, but was forced to abandon his studies. He then became apprenticed to a carpenter who made coffins because "that was the nearest to medicine." His wife, he said, had been the best hatmaker in the country, catering to the social elite. The couple took up residence in Jerusalem when they arrived 62 years ago, and have lived in the capital ever since.

SWARMED BY offers from tinsel town following his success with *Shine*, Australian director Scott Hicks told Warner Brothers he would love to adapt the 1992 best-selling murder mystery *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt. Since Warner owns the film rights for the book, it didn't take long before Hicks got together with screenwriter Rafael Yglesias. Tartt, who doesn't see many movies, is on tenterhooks waiting for the results. Now working on her next novel, she doesn't want to be part of the screenwriting effort, and bearing in mind how much license Hicks took with *Shine*, she stated she doesn't care if the script is faithful to her text. She's scribbled plenty of horrible movies which were faithful to the book, she said. But she also saw *Shine* and loved it.

THE ASSOCIATION of Kirk Douglas with Aish HaTorah, the religious outreach program, has already been well documented. The ailing actor, who has returned to his Jewish heritage, last year sponsored a well-attended Aish HaTorah Discovery seminar at Universal Studios in L.A. A couple of months later Elliott Gould followed suit with a similar mindbender in New York. Last month the ball was back in the L.A. court, where Jason Alexander of *Seinfeld* hosted some thousand participants at a Celebrity Discovery Seminar.

SRULIK

by DOSH



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

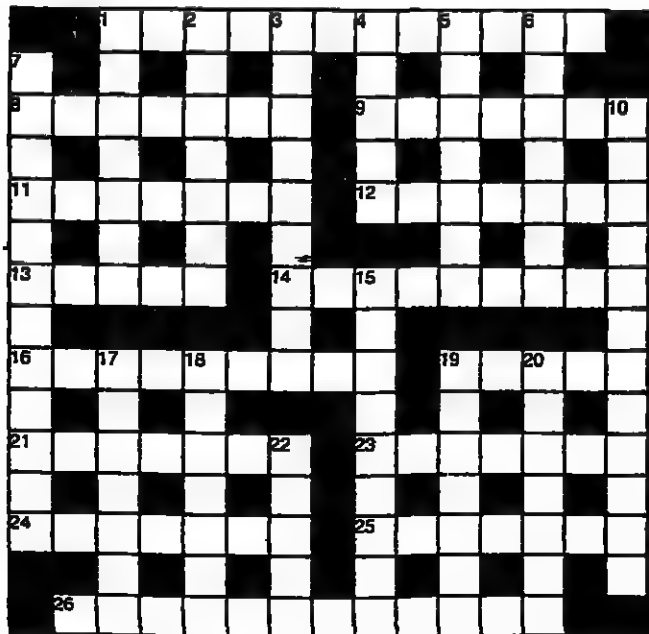
ACROSS

- 1 Erratic of USA to produce such a weapon? (7-2-3)
- 8 Pure ingredient of blanching (5)
- 9 Only white rulers in this office? (7)
- 11 Recluse has English clock put back with key (7)
- 12 An enormous trouble for a lady's maid (7)
- 13 Reinforce small strike in sympathy with church leaders (5)
- 14 Primaries brought out such showmen (9)
- 16 Derelict ancestral house (9)
- 19 Everyone in California finds the arum-ily (5)
- 21 Feeler put out by social worker to retired girl (7)

- 23 Novel old instrument with two keys (7)
- 24 Port in Wales was switched to North Sea (7)
- 25 Room in gaol for Brown, gone wrong? (7)
- 26 Concerned with a branch of learning, go mad! (12)

DOWN

- 1 Government agents in established piece (7)
- 2 He introduced Virginia to Elizabeth (7)
- 3 Old scientist who converted St Michael (9)



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HOT STRAITS
OFTEN
NOCTURNAL
REVIEWER
ELEGANT
PRIMITIVE
PRAISE
SPOONER
TO A
STILEMANTANE

Yesterday's Quick Solution
ACROSS: 1. Capter, 4. Levers, 7. Mugging, 9. Deal, 10. Trim, 11. Taint, 13. Jesters, 14. Grown, 15. Carven, 17. Fathom, 19. Spray, 20. Lament, 22. Gria, 23. Leviathan, 24. Extant, 25. Death.

DOWN: 1. Candid, 2. Toll, 3. Reggae, 4. Loving, 5. Vent, 6. Sermon, 7. Marrow, 8. Greenhorn, 11. Tress, 12. Today, 15. Clutch, 16. Spoilt, 17. Fasted, 18. Munich, 21. Mesa, 22. Gage.

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Rule (5)
- 4 Bank order (6)
- 9 Impressive (7)
- 10 Form (5)
- 11 Sole (4)
- 12 Watching (7)
- 13 Beer (3)
- 14 Profile (4)
- 16 Beans (4)
- 18 Declare (3)
- 20 Take out (7)
- 21 Roman emperor (4)
- 24 Jewish teacher (5)
- 25 Immediate (7)
- 26 Mistakes (6)
- 27 Sea (5)

DOWN

- 1 Basis (6)
- 2 Perfect (5)
- 3 Midday (4)
- 5 Inn (8)
- 6 Characteristic (7)
- 7 Vigour (6)
- 8 Depart (5)
- 13 Bee-keeper (8)
- 15 Autumn month (7)
- 17 Ordain (6)
- 18 Denude (5)
- 19 Mitigate (6)
- 22 Obliterate (5)
- 23 Norwegian capital (4)

L'expression personnelle



WATERMAN



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FREE PRESS

Remember how the relentless underground writers and journalists of the old Soviet dissident and refusenik days were internationally admired? It was ironic then that it was from Moscow that Netanyahu's director-general, Avigdor Lieberman, chose to launch an open threat to Channel 1. "Those who made us get interrogated for two months and let our blood not get away with it," he was quoted as saying (out of context, no doubt). "Someone will have to answer for all that I and others have been through."

It was the government's own finance minister, Dan Meridor, who was the first to point out that the ranting atmosphere at the Likud central committee was reminiscent of the violent atmosphere of incitement against the late Yitzhak Rabin.

Journalists Association chairman Arye Avneri elaborated on the thought: "We know the people we live among, we know some lunatic can translate 'death to the media' into practical terms."

Israel Broadcasting Authority director Mordechai Kirschenbaum told *Ha'aretz* this week: "What happened at the Likud meeting was no less than incitement to murder journalists. It's time we understood that. When the crowd says 'death to journalists' and Netanyahu cups his ear so that they shout louder, it's extremely dangerous. Do we want to wait until a journalist is murdered?"

The association has begun collecting inciting public statements by politicians from the prime minister down. It is perhaps for a warning, or for evidence - hopefully not after the fact. Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein, who was swift to order an investigation into the routine leak from a cabinet meeting, has been strangely silent about the "death to journalists" matter.

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Friday,
March 14,
1997

BUSINESS & FINANCE

15

BITS & BYTES

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

Applicom releases RadJa for website development. Development with Java (RadJa), a visual programming environment that enables the user to create Java applets and applications without the need for programming in Java code. The RadJa product is being offered to programmers as an aid to shorten development time of Java-based applications.

Check Point, Walden and Gemini invest \$2.5m. in Israel start-up. Check Point Software Technologies, Ltd., an Israeli maker of firewall technology, Walden International Investment Group, Gemini, Forval Creative, Inc. and Blumberg Capital invested \$2.5m. in AbirNet Ltd., a privately-held company that manufactures intranet network protection technologies. AbirNet provides solutions that safeguard companies' internal networks against systems' intrusions that can occur when employees utilize the Internet and World Wide Web.

NetManage to supply Sony with connectivity software. NetManage, Inc. (Nasdaq: NETM) recently announced that Sony of Canada has purchased NetManage's Chameleon HostLink software, which was bought for an undisclosed sum, will allow Sony to connect the company's Windows' operated workstations with any of its IBM or Unix servers. Based in Cupertino, California, NetManage has three development centers in Israel.

Orckit and Fujitsu sign joint development agreement. Orckit Communications, Ltd. (Nasdaq: ORCTF) and Fujitsu Network Communications, Inc. recently announced the signing of a joint development and strategic marketing alliance agreement. The agreement stipulates that Fujitsu will resell Orckit's FastInternet access system and other digital subscriber line products, which are designed to provide high-speed modem access over existing telephone lines. According to the agreement, both companies will also work to integrate Orckit's DSL technology into Fujitsu's platforms.

Nexus signs \$2m. agreement with Asian co. Nexus Telecommunications Systems Ltd. (Nasdaq: NXUSF) of Givatayim has signed a \$2m. agreement to sell its two-way paging systems to an undisclosed telecommunications operator in Southeast Asia. The contract does not include end-user units which will be purchased directly from Samsung Electronics, under a license agreement with Nexus. The two-way paging system allows subscribers to receive an incoming message through the existing paging networks and then transmit a return message.

Samsung delegation to visit Israel: A delegation of Samsung Electronics executives is scheduled to arrive in Israel at the end of the month and to visit more than 100 Israeli high-tech concerns, including ECI, Motorola, Israel Aircraft Industries, Tadiran and several start-up companies. Samsung, South Korea's largest concern, and the world's largest maker of computer memory chips, recorded sales of \$84b. in 1996. The group, which consists of 28 companies, manufactures a wide range of goods, including televisions, computers and telecommunications products.

Security-7 to release beta-site version of security technology. Security-7 Ltd. of Haifa recently announced that next month it will release its Internet security software for beta-site testing in Israel. The security system is designed to help protect medium- and large-sized corporations' computer systems from security-violating executables, such as Java applets and ActiveX components that can infiltrate via the Internet or intranet and cause irreversible damage to local data bases, unauthorized file retrieval and disk crashing.

Virgin Records and Time Warner to adapt Geo's Emblaze Creator. Time Warner and Virgin Records recently announced that they will deploy Geo Interactive Media's Emblaze Creator product in their Web home pages. The Emblaze technology allows site developers to operate multimedia components such as video, animation and sound on Internet Web sites. Geo (L.N: GIM) is scheduled to release the Emblaze Creator in April.

Federman bids for Strauss stake in Elite Industries

Offer suggests company value of more than twice TASE price

By GALIT LIPKIS BECK

Elite Industries' controlling shareholder, the Federman family, yesterday offered to purchase the Strauss group's minority stake in the country's leading sweets and snacks producer, at more than double the market value, as reflected in Elite's share price on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange.

According to the offer agreement, the Strauss family can instead, within 60 days, offer to purchase all of the Federman family's shares in Elite at a price 2.5% below Federman's purchase offer.

This week the Strauss Group informed the Federman family of its intention to break up the Elite joint control agreement and purchase the Federman family's holdings in the company, said Elite chairman David Federman. Under the Strauss-Federman ownership and voting agreement, the major shareholders can take advantage of a Buy Me/Buy You mechanism whereby any party can offer to purchase his partner's shares in the company at a specified price.

According to the agreement, the partner must respond to the offer within 60 days, or may instead decide to buy out the offer. Federman yesterday triggered the agreement.

The Federman family is offering to purchase Elite NIS 1 shares at NIS 38 per share and Elite NIS 5 shares at NIS 67.25. On Wednesday, Elite NIS 1 shares traded at NIS 17.98 per share while Elite NIS 5 shares traded at NIS 79.86 per share on the TASE.

If Strauss decides to purchase Federman's shares, they will be acquired according to a company value of \$517m., Elite said in a statement. The price is 117% above the company's market value, Wednesday which stood at \$238m.



Michael Strauss (Dana Strauss/Israel Sun)

The Federman family currently holds 26.28 percent of Elite's voting shares and 13% of its capital shares, while the Strauss Group, through Gideon Holdings, controls 19.17% of the voting shares and 17.59% of the capital shares.

If Strauss takes advantage of the offer it will not only break up the two families' joint control of the company but will also end the Federman family's 12-year investment in the company. Michael Strauss, chairman and CEO of Strauss, could not be reached for comment.

The Federman family's shares are mortgaged to banks to secure a \$20m. loan that was used to finance the purchase of Elite shares from British Man, after a power struggle for control.

Capital market sources claim the Federman family is paying high interest rates on the loan, which was taken more than a year ago.

Following the purchase, Federman sold a package of shares to the Strauss group, turning it into a partner in the company.

The French-based food giant Danone, which has recently examined a possible acquisition in some areas of Elite's operations, recently purchased 20% of Strauss Dairies for \$56m. Strauss is one of the country's largest privately owned food companies. The company has an equal partnership with Unilever in the ice-cream division.

In a letter to Elite workers Federman said he will provide reasons for his actions after the 60-day waiting period. He urged the workers to maintain industrial peace.

"Elite is at the start of a new period of rapid success in all fields - it is our duty to maintain the continuation of this process," said Federman.

Elite has recently gone through a process of reorganization: It has closed unprofitable divisions and split up into separate "profit centers" to help it cope with increased competition from international food conglomerates and to facilitate its penetration of overseas markets. Various analysts forecast that over the next two years Elite will benefit from its reorganization.

Elite finished 1996 with a NIS 18.1m. profit, compared to a net loss of NIS 6.8m. in the corresponding period last year. In the fourth quarter of 1996, the company posted a net loss of NIS 13.7m., compared with a net loss of NIS 47.3m. in the same quarter last year.

The fourth-quarter results include one-off expenses and write-offs from the reorganization plan and closure of the company's European coffee factory, amounting to NIS 17.28m. in 1996 and NIS 47.7m. in 1995.

Sharon, Russians to discuss gas deal

By DAVID HARRIS

National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon and RAO Gazprom, the world's largest gas producer, are to begin negotiating a possible Israeli gas purchase from Russia, Prime Minister's Office deputy spokesman Ofir Akonius said yesterday.

Such a deal was discussed during the Moscow meeting this week between Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, according to Netanyahu's spokesman, Shai Bazzal.

Netanyahu told his counterpart he would be happy to consider buying gas from Russia if it is economically feasible, said Akonius. The two agreed that Sharon should travel to Russia in the coming weeks to begin the negotiations.

"This is just another possibility in the basket," said Sharon's spokesman Ra'anan Gissin. "We are not cancelling our interest in Egypt and Qatar. Russia could be either an alternative or an additional supplier."

Negotiations are continuing between Israel and Egypt for the supply of natural gas via a land or sea pipeline. However, the government fears total dependency on one source, particularly given political tensions in the region, and is examining several alternative sources, including Turkey, Russia and Turkmenistan.

The various proposals to bring gas from such distances are described by industry experts as not viable, either financially or logistically. However, executives at Merhav, an Israeli company invested in Turkmenistan, believe it is possible for a pipeline to be constructed to Israel from that country, which has one of the world's largest gas reserves.

Turkmeni Foreign Minister Boris Shakhmuradov has requested a meeting with Sharon to discuss the supply of natural gas to Israel during his visit here next week. Meanwhile, during Netanyahu's visit to Russia, he and Chernomyrdin signed a customs cooperation agreement between the countries. As a result, the authorities in both states will participate in joint investigations. This is a particularly important agreement, in the light of the expected increase in bilateral trade, said Customs and VAT Director Moti Ayalon.

The two governments also pledged to negotiate an agreement to prevent double taxation.

Sharon to present to cabinet artificial islands plan

By DAVID HARRIS

The cabinet is scheduled to discuss the construction of a series of islands off the coast during its weekly meeting this morning, the first-time National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon puts the idea before the cabinet.

The multibillion dollar project, to be entirely financed by private investments, consists of a series of islands to be constructed opposite the major coastal cities: Tel Aviv, Haifa, Herzliya and Netanya.

Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy will recommend considering the transfer of Tel Aviv's Sde Dov Airport to an island to be built opposite the city.

Levy will call for the creation of an interministerial committee to investigate the possibility over the next six months. The team would include representatives from the Transport, Finance, National Infrastructure, Interior, and Environment ministries, the Airports Authority and Tel Aviv Municipality.

The existing Sde Dov airport is restricted to handling small and medium-sized aircraft. The new site would be built to allow larger aircraft, enabling direct flights to Tel Aviv from Europe.

A proposal to transfer Ben-Gurion Airport to an artificial island is also being discussed. However, it would take seven years to decide if such a move is even feasible.

Each island, measuring a square kilometer, would house

20,000 people, provide employment for 10,000, and draw another 20,000 each day for tourism and business. They would be linked to the shore with bridges. Tunnels leading to the islands in shallow water would link islands in relatively close proximity. It is estimated each island would cost \$1 billion.

"I am in favor of the construction of these islands," said Sharon, during a recent meeting with experts on the issue. "It is my intention to implement this. It could change the quality of life for those who live along Israel's coast."

Experts believe that if the plan is approved, construction of the first island could begin off Tel Aviv within three years.

Alon gas stations deny Shabbat closure

By GALIT LIPKIS BECK

Alon-Israel Oil company, the operator of local gas stations, intends to continue to open its gas stations on Shabbat, in contrast to reports that Africa-Israel, one of the major shareholders has requested the company to close on Shabbat, the company announced this week.

Alon denied reports that Africa-Israel, under the control of its new shareholder Orthodox businessman Lev Levayev, has requested it to close stations on Saturday. Assuming Africa-Israel does request it to close on Saturday, the offer will be rejected, said Alon, emphasizing that it will continue to operate all stations all days of the week, with the exception of stations situated in religious areas.

Alon is among the country's younger gas station companies, founded five years ago following government reforms to increase competition in the fuel sector. The company is owned by the Kibbutz Movement, which owns 37% of the shares, a group of private investors which also own 37% of the company's stock and Africa-Israel which owns the remaining 26% of the shares. The company currently operates 18 public gas stations as well as 120 internal gas stations in kibbutzim and other closed communities.

In related news, Tel Aviv Deputy Mayor Dan Darin who is also in charge of city building, is threatening not to give Africa-Israel building approvals if the company goes ahead with its plans to close the Ramat Aviv Mall on Shabbat.

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Pound sterling (£100,000)	3.875	4.000	4.250	
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.825	1.925	2.125	
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.625	0.700	1.000	
(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)				
Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (13.3.97)				
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U.S. dollar	3.3301	3.3338	3.27	3.3550
German mark	1.9682	1.9880	1.98	1.9884
Pound sterling	5.3432	5.4284	5.28	5.3831
French franc	0.8825	0.8919	0.87	0.8886
Japanese yen (100)	2.7123	2.7581	2.86	2.7402
Dutch florin	1.7472	1.7754	1.71	1.7653
Swiss franc	2.2911	2.3281	2.26	2.3167
Swedish krona	0.4353	0.4424	0.42	0.4410
Norwegian krona	0.4886	0.4975	0.48	0.4955
Danish krone	0.2182	0.2238	0.20	0.2204
Finnish mark	0.8694	0.8881	0.84	0.8650
Canadian dollar	2.4455	2.4830	2.40	2.4688
Australian dollar	2.6396	2.6822	2.59	2.6550
S. African rand	0.7584	0.7688	0.68	0.7648
Belgian franc (10)	0.9630	0.9884	0.93	0.9628
Austrian schilling (10)	2.7937	2.8388	2.74	2.8223
Italian lire (1000)	1.9711	1.9928	1.93	1.9508
Jordanian dinar	4.9400	4.9600	4.84	4.7447
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NEWS

in brief

Har Homa construction starts Monday

Israel will begin construction on Har Homa on Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazak said last night.

The issue of moving ahead with Har Homa was raised at yesterday's inner cabinet meeting, though, due to the Naharayim tragedy, the discussion was brief.

David Macovsky

A-G to give opinion on PA office closure

Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein told Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani yesterday that he would formulate his opinion on the legality of closing four Palestinian offices in eastern Jerusalem by the beginning of next week. Rubinstein is expected to relate to whether documents claiming that the four offices are not affiliated to the Palestinian Authority are indeed valid and can stand up in court. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave orders last week to close the offices.

Batsheva Tsor

Families of terror victims call for justice

Families of terror victims called on the government yesterday to demand that the Palestinian Authority bring to trial those who killed their relatives.

They made the demand at a Jerusalem press conference organized by Yehuda Wachman, Stanley Boim and Moti Yamin. Wachman's and Boim's sons and Yamin's father were killed by terrorists.

"Our demand is minimal: to at least request the murderers' capture and bring them to trial. We aren't even talking about their extradition and being brought to trial in Israel," Wachman said. "Our citizens are being kidnapped and murdered in the streets and the government isn't demanding the minimum — that it [the PA] extradite murderers."

Iim

Tel Aviv Marathon to disrupt traffic

Traffic congestion is expected today in the center of Tel Aviv during the city's annual marathon. Some 800 policemen will be on duty in the city, closing off roads for the runners and directing drivers to alternate routes. Police are asking motorists to follow the special road signs and obey instructions of policemen.

Iim

UTJ joins Ramat Aviv mall fight

Knesset Finance Committee Chairman Avraham Ravitz and MK Moshe Gafni, both of United Torah Judaism, have written to Interior Minister Eli Shussman demanding he investigate the Tel Aviv municipality, Mayor Ronni Milo, and Deputy Mayor Dan Daria for announcing they will not grant building permits to Africa Israel because of its decision to close the Ramat Aviv shopping mall on Shabbat. They also filed a police complaint.

In the plenum, MK Shalom Simhon (Labor) called for an investigation into the company, saying that it had cheated investors by not announcing in advance its intention to keep the mall closed on Shabbat.

Liat Collins

Indyk responds to Ze'evi slur

After a week of keeping mum on being called a "Jewboy" by Moshe Ze'evi, US Ambassador Martin Indyk said yesterday: "A member of Congress who engaged in such an antisemitic slur on a representative of a friendly government... would not be a member of Congress today."

Indyk addressed a meeting of the Council on the Peace Process After Hebron, was responding to the apologies of several participants, including David Kimche, president of the Israel Council on Foreign Relations and Avi Becker, director of the Israel office of the World Jewish Congress. Greer Fay Cashman

NA'AMA

Continued from Page 12

has for Karmei Tzur residents: get ready for a plague of theft. Since the implementation of autonomy, Hasson says, her households — where the family grows flowers — and warehouses have been robbed five times. The battles she wages are more with the tax authorities, trying to get money back for stolen goods — insurance companies won't provide insurance there anymore — than with the Palestinians.

IN SEPTEMBER 1993, immediately after the signing of the Oslo accords, Hasson's husband, Ya'acov, took part in one of the first protests against the accords in the Jordan Valley. "The warring and the uncertainty will kill us," he said then. "I'm a citizen; I deserve to know my fate and the fate of my children... We want peace. We will readily abide by what the government decides. If there is a Palestinian state here, we will leave. We just want to know now."

Nearly four years later, and the Hassons still don't know. The uncertainty takes a huge emotional toll. Liora Hasson gets annoyed when reminded of those who say that, if she wanted, she could end the uncertainty now and leave Na'ama; that the reason she is staying is to get generous government compensation down the road.

"I do not wish upon anyone the emotional turmoil of the last few years," says Hasson, a mother of four. "No amount of money will compensate me for that emotional anguish. I am willing to trade places with those who now have a sense of security in their homes, and in the lives that they have built." Hasson says she just wants to know where things stand. "I want the final arrangements now," she says. "I want to know where the border will be. That that's already that it's over. As is, I don't know if this house is here forever, or only temporarily."

IN 1994, the year that autonomy was implemented in Jericho, 12 babies were born in Na'ama, meaning that nearly half of the settlement's families grew. Both Hasson and Maller, also a mother of four, gave birth that year.



Na'ama, an Israeli enclave.

Hasson jokes that this was the settlement's answer to the accords, a show of defiance, an indication that the people were consciously deepening their attachment to the area.

But she knows it was probably just an example of cyclical pregnancies that hit many small communities: one pregnancy leading to another, enabling enough children for a preschool class.

Hasson is not pounding her family's stakes further into Na'ama, even though she has added a kitchen, living room and bedroom to her home since the settlement became an enclave. "But," she says, "this was just to enhance our quality of life. At the time we made a decision that it is not the time to build our dream house."

Hasson, who grew up in Holon, came to Na'ama 14 years ago with her husband for ideological reasons. Having her home uprooted is, therefore, very traumatic. The trauma is less for Maller, who, with her husband Pini, came to the area 12 years ago because it was an affordable place to set up an agricultural endeavor. She is less traumatized than Hasson by the thought of uprooting and moving. Maybe, she admits, because she did it once when her family when they immigrated from Riga in 1974.

Though difficult, she saw then that uprooting and moving is not

Arafat complains about settlements

PA leader also rejects Israel's redeployment, slams Har Homa plans

By JON IMMANUEL

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat opened a meeting of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Bethlehem yesterday with an attack on "the monster called settlements which are eating up our land, eating the peace process."

The meeting, on the second floor of City Hall, was almost within eyesight of Har Homa.

He called the offer of redeployment from seven percent from Area B "taking something out of one of my pockets and putting it in another of my pockets. They are giving me something that I already have. We rejected this suggestion and we will continue to reject it because we cannot be fooled. We cannot accept this injustice and this arrogance."

He said that Har Homa construction and

further redeployment were only two of more than 70 issues that remained to be resolved with Israel.

Arafat gave Netanyahu no credit for things he had done, like releasing all the women prisoners, which he said occurred only "after 60 fights between us."

He said that Israel was not paying its debts to the PA. "If I showed you the lists of financial demands we have you would be astonished," he said.

These related to reimbursement for international phone calls, and to customs charged on 23,000 cars purchased in the past three years.

PA Cabinet Secretary Ahmed Abdel-Rahman said yesterday that tomorrow's Gaza conference is not meant to replace direct Israeli-Palestinian talks but to clarify the legality of the Palestinian position on

recent Israeli decisions to the signatories of the peace agreements.

He said that televised comments by government Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh concerning Palestinian refusal to meet face-to-face with Israeli government officials were untrue.

Naveh said that the Palestinians should stop circumventing the peace process by trying to establish international forums like the Gaza conference, and return to direct talks.

Abdel-Rahman said contacts are still taking place at a lower level, for example, with Netanyahu's chief negotiator Yitzhak Molcho.

He said the Gaza conference, which will include diplomats from the US, Russia, European Union, Japan, Egypt, Jordan and Norway was not in place of bilateral talks but in addition to them.

US Consul-General Edward Abington, who is to attend the forum, said "the intention of the United States is to defuse the tension and to try to find ways to get the process back on track."

Hillel Kuntler adds: Leaders of both houses of Congress are urging President Clinton to reconsider the administration's participation in tomorrow's conference in Gaza.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jesse Helms sent separate letters to Clinton yesterday.

Thirty-one Democrats in the House, including minority leader Richard Gephardt, sent yet another letter to Clinton that called the US participation "a serious mistake" that would "jeopardize" Washington's role as an honest broker in Israeli-Palestinian talks.

TRUST

Continued from Page 9

May 1999.

As it stands, the price of unilateral actions taken for domestic political purposes — as opposed to necessary actions for national security — is sharply rising as the peace process continues. One US official said: "Netanyahu used up his political credit after Hebron by building Har Homa."

BOTH LIKUD officials and senior Western diplomats said they do not see how Netanyahu can hold the coalition and peace process together, and at some point Netanyahu will have to make some tough choices between his current coalition and the creation of a unity government.

If Netanyahu survives Har Homa, no-confidence votes and the Bar-On investigation, this crossroads is likely to occur this fall, at the time of the second pull-back when partition of the West Bank comes into clearer focus.

Predictably, Begin says Netanyahu should choose the coalition. "You can hold a stick at both ends, but you cannot direct it anywhere," he said. "You cannot keep Mubarak, Hussein, Arafat, and [Likud MK and Oslo opponent Michael] Kleiner happy simultaneously." Begin said he hopes Netanyahu realizes that "there is no agreement possible between Israel and the PLO since the differences are too wide."

A senior Western diplomat expressed a widely held view about Netanyahu and his government: "either the peace process survives or his government survives. This is his dilemma: make history or be history. He has to

make a decision. Balancing will only work for a short time."

When asked how Netanyahu will reconcile between peace and domestic politics, an official in the Prime Minister's Office said: "It is true that there is very little room to maneuver between the coalition and the international situation."

Yet, fashioning the broadest coalition for peace is not just dependent upon maneuvering around domestic minefields and even joining a unity government.

It seems that Netanyahu, who has already crossed the ideological Rubicon by going ahead with Hebron and other aspects of Oslo, now needs to go to the public and explain, as General Security Service head Ami Ayalon, has made clear, that peace serves all interests including Israel's security interest. Arafat, who began this with his conciliatory speech in Hebron in January, needs to reinforce this theme with his people as well.

By Netanyahu focusing on the public no less than the Knesset, such leadership could retain and even enlarge the consensus. By all sides reducing domestic constraints, it would facilitate much needed, and heretofore sorely lacking, trust between leaders and peoples.

Hussein, who postponed a trip to the US because of yesterday's shooting, described the attack as "treacherous bullets to have been directed against him and his sons and daughters in his own home."

The king will always be associated with his outstanding legacy alongside Rabin's grave.

"Let's not keep silent," he said. "Let our voices rise high to speak of our commitment to peace for all times to come... This is where we stand. This is our camp."

ly of how the agreements do not call for the uprooting of any settlements. But Na'ama's residents are not being fooled. They think it's just a matter of time.

What particularly annoys Maller is that her property is worthless. "I have invested too much in the place to leave now," she says. "Either they should come to a solution, or tell us to leave." It is the waiting period, she maintains, that is so cruel.

In the meantime, Maller and her husband continue pumping money into their enterprise. There is no choice. "We have to eat, and to eat we have to invest," she says. Paradoxically, she says, under the Likud grants have been substantially cut, adding to Maller's belief that no one is really serious about having Jews stay in the area. "If they were serious, they would make it financially easier for us."

For Maller, the settlement's bleak future does not seem to hover over her constantly, like a dark, heavy cloud. "It hurts to think that I will not be able to pass my home here down as an inheritance, or that we won't be able to plant a tree now and enjoy its fruits years down the road," she says. "But we don't think about it every minute. We can't live with it every minute."

had become Area A [PA controlled], even technicians and repairmen would be too scared to come here."

Terraced agricultural plots crisscross the countryside, in some places almost touching the barbed-wire fence that surrounds the settlement. Some of the plots have been left unattended and have dried up. On the western side of the settlement, the land has recently been plowed up.

Gillis, an immigrant from England who moved to Karmei Tzur six years ago, says, "We saw so many settlements before we decided to move here. Many had extravagant houses, but we were searching for simplicity, and Karmei Tzur appealed to us."

The question that remains is whether communities like it appeal to the government. Karmei Tzur's residents are not at all sure. "If the decision makers took more effort in planning the infrastructure, the roads, and took into account the natural expansion and development of settlements," says Uliel, "perhaps we wouldn't have been in danger of being cut off."

MESSAGE

Continued from Page 9

SAN FRANCISCO consul-general Nimrod Barkan calls his region a success story. The four most important newspapers there — *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Seattle Times* and *The Oregonian* — have refrained from running a single editorial on the recent Israeli-Palestinian disputes.

In just a 10-day period, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* ran a total of three editorials attacking the Har Homa plan.

Barkan says that he hasn't "sold them on the correctness of our policy," but that the consulate has forestalled negative press by presenting credible analyses on the regional situation.

He adds that he is well-connected to the foreign ministry and the embassy and gets all the required support.

A second Israeli official in the US is in Ben-Elissar's corner but says of Israel's inability to sell its message: "There is a deep crisis. I say it with sorrow." The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Ben-Elissar must share part of the blame, particularly for two blunders in the past week. One was leaving town during Arafat's visit, which Ben-Elissar says is a coincidence and much ado about nothing.

The other error occurred hours after his return, when Ben-Elissar summoned Israeli reporters to announce that US special Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross had just told him that State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns had mistakenly characterized the elevated US-Palestinian relationship. That set off two days of highly unusual, unseemly public snapping between Ben-Elissar and Burns, made all the worse by the sharp bilateral differences over Har Homa and the PA offices.

But Levy and Netanyahu are more culpable, the official said, for holding up the appointment of an ambassador to the UN and not naming a replacement for departing New York consul-general Colette Avital.

It goes without saying that not having a Netanyahu-like figure in the UN — or anyone permanent for that matter — was a liability last week as the Security Council resolution opposing Har Homa came to the floor.

A sitting New York consul-general could also have played a key role in briefing the national Jewish organizational leadership.

One American Jewish official said Ben-Elissar has done a better job recently in reaching out to the Jewish community, but is plagued by a "kind of cognitive dissonance" in talking of advancing the peace process while doing "a lot of complaining" about it.

The appointment of the non-English-speaking Kiryat Yam mayor Shmuel Siso as New York consul-general — along with last summer's Netanyahu-Levy maneuvering that sent neither's top choice, Ben-Elissar, to Washington — smack of "small-time local politics" now working to Israel's detriment, the Israeli official said. "Very serious national interests are being sacrificed," he asserts.

As if that were not enough, he said Ben-Elissar could be shooting Israel's representatives to the US in the foot by so far refusing to authorize the consul-general's participation at April's annual conference of AIPAC, the acknowledged giant of pro-Israel lobby groups. The two-day event has long been considered invaluable for Israeli diplomats to strengthen links with congressmen and senators. Ben-Elissar considers AIPAC "the most important organization" in the US, but said his decision "boiled down to money."

"I thought that we had to make important cuts in our budget, that the expense would not [yield] the results we could achieve otherwise."

"So the consul-general will be here and he will do what? He will see all his states' constituents' representatives? So in what sense will his trip pay? If he tells me it would be important to meet all those people, first of all, he could meet them in his own region."

"And if he thinks he should meet them in the Senate, here on the [Capitol] Hill, it would be okay. I'm here being very, very pragmatic. If it's necessary, do it; if it doesn't pay, don't do it. It's very simple."

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Thursday April 24

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הכרזת הנאמן

Efes Pilsen cuts short Maccabi's European season

Naumoski leads Turks into quarterfinals with 84-69 win

By BRIAN FREEMAN

The old adage that great players come through in big games proved true last night, as Efes Pilsen star Petar Naumoski scored 32 points to lead the Turks to an 84-69 win over Maccabi Tel Aviv in their third and decisive Final 16 Euroleague match in Istanbul.

The loss ends Maccabi's European season, while Efes Pilsen advances to the quarterfinals to meet Villeneuve, which defeated Estudiantes Madrid 75-71 in the third game of their series last night in France.

Maccabi had succeeded in containing Efes Pilsen's brilliant point guard in the first two games of the series, but Naumoski was not to be denied this time.

He drilled baskets from outside, drove the lane virtually at will and was a perfect 13-13 from the free-throw line before a wildly enthusiastic home crowd.

Efes Pilsen won its tenth consecutive European game in Istanbul, including a 76-67 victory over Maccabi in Game 1, and also secured the home-court advantage for the best-of-three quarterfinals, which begins on March 27.

Naumoski had a hand, via either a basket or assist, in the Turks' first eight points and never slowed down, scoring 23 points in the first half as Efes took a 42-29 lead into the locker room.

The Israelis had raced back from a 21-12 deficit midway through the half to take a 24-23 lead with 7:15 to go. But that advantage, the last



FUTILE EFFORT - Maccabi's Constantin Pops (left) and Doron Sheffer (face hidden) try to stop Efes Pilsen's Volkan Aydin during play in last night's game.

which added to the Turkish point total.

Maccabi came out of the locker room after the break as if it was ready to give the Turks a real battle on their home court, cutting the lead to 49-43 with 15 minutes remaining.

But then Randy White, who led Maccabi with 20 points, missed a wide-open dunk in what proved to be the turning point. Efes took advantage of the blunder to go on a 9-0 run and boost the lead to double digits with 10 minutes left. The Israelis were unable to get any closer than nine points the rest of the way.

In contrast to Naumoski coming through in the clutch, Maccabi had no such player step up for the big game.

Although Oded Katash broke out of his slump to score 15 points, including three three-pointers, the overall team effort looked nothing like the 78-65 victory on Tuesday at Yad Eliahu which had evened the series at one game apiece.

And Doron Sheffer, whose experience in big-time college basketball at the University of Connecticut was supposed to have prepared him for the European wars, once again proved a major disappointment.

He scored only two points on the night and collected an embarrassing error during the series.

Head coach Zvi Sherf also took his team to the Turkish capital for a

useless and ill-timed technical foul

For Maccabi, White had 20, Katash 15, Ronen 12, Sherf 10, Doron Sheffer 7, Doron Sheffer 5, Doron Sheffer 3 and Sherf 2.

For Efes Pilsen, Naumoski scored 32, Doron Sheffer 13, Doron Sheffer 11, Doron Sheffer 11, Doron Sheffer 7 and Doron Sheffer 5.

Brumer impresses at Old Trafford

By MARK HYMAN

LONDON - Maccabi Tel Aviv defender Gadi Brumer returned to Israel last night after completing a three-day trial at English Premiership leaders Manchester United.

The 23-year-old Israeli international joined the first team squad in two training sessions and played a full practice match between the first and second teams on Wednesday.

Brumer was the subject of transfer speculation in November last year when Israeli agent Pinhas Zehavi had set up a trial at last season's double-winners, but injury prevented the player from traveling to Manchester.

After this week's trial, United manager Alex Ferguson said the club were still keeping their options open.

"We are looking for a possible

transfer over the summer, and by then I hope to come and see Gadi in action at least once in Israel," Ferguson said on Wednesday.

Ferguson added that Brumer had done well on the trial and believed the South African-born player had enjoyed the experience.

Brumer too was pleased with his performance, telling reporters that it had been an excellent learning experience.

English newspapers covered the story in their sports sections yesterday, stating that Brumer could well be a target for Ferguson over the summer.

United have been looking for a replacement for Steve Bruce, who was transferred to First Division Birmingham City, and aside from Brumer, Ferguson has reportedly been making enquiries about Spanish defender Roberto Rios of Real Betis.

Tel Aviv (half) Marathon sets off today

By JOEL GORDIN

All the country's leading long distance runners will take part in the half-marathon race to be held through the streets of Tel Aviv this morning.

The 21.1km race is one of the three events which make up the annual "Tel Aviv Marathon" organized jointly by the Hapoel Sports Center and the Tel Aviv Municipality. The others are the 5km "mini-marathon" and the 10km "popular" race. The full marathon was abandoned three years ago as a result of the traffic gridlocks caused in the metropolis.

The men's entry list is a who's who of local runners. They include national record-holder Dov Cramer, Elin Gedi road race champion Hali Setine, veteran Yair Karmi, Assaf Binuro, Daniel Dasta and Amit Neuman.

Among the men, overseas visitors are Belgian Peter van Vakked and Russia's Alexander Godin, whose best times both surpass the course record of 1:02:23 set two years ago by Kenyan Philemon Metto.

Moroccan champion Hachas El-Maiti, an original entry, has canceled his participation. There will be a "grudge" match-up in the women's section. Nili

Abramski won the national marathon title in Tiberias in January when her main opponent Ella Krissman was disqualified after a controversial decision.

Krissman, a new immigrant from Moldova, led all the way until she fell in the last kilometer. Well-meaning spectators rushed to help her to her feet and she was disqualified under the rule which states that a runner must finish the course without help.

Krissman and her coach, Karmi, appealed the decision, stating that the runner had not requested help and that "if the organization had been better, spectators would have been kept away from her."

It's doubtful if either of the women will beat Hungarian Helena Barotzi, who last year set a course record of 1:02:23. The slim 30-year-old Hungarian, a frequent visitor to Israel, also won this year's Ein Gedi road race. The organizers expect more than 1,000 runners to compete in the half-marathon and mini-marathon both of which will start from Hadar Yosef Stadium at 10 a.m. More than 15,000 participants, mostly schoolchildren, will run in the popular race to be held at Rabin Square after the marathon torch is lit at 9:15 by Olympic silver medalist Gal Friedman.

Top-ranked Kansas wins opener as March Madness begins

MEMPHIS (Reuter) - Top-ranked Kansas took the first step on the road to the Final Four yesterday with a convincing victory over the opening day of the 1997 NCAA men's college basketball tournament.

Scot Pollard had 12 points, 19 rebounds and five blocked shots to lead top-seeded Kansas to a 78-64 victory over 16th-seeded Jackson State in the Southeast Region opener.

Cincinnati and California also posted early wins in the 64-team tournament as "March Madness" got underway with play at four regional sites.

Paul Pierce added 19 points for Kansas, which broke open the game early in the second half after Jackson State had pulled within eight points at 51-43.

The Jayhawks (33-1) will next play the winner of the Purdue-Rhode Island game in the second round tomorrow.

Trent Piliham scored 22 points

to lead Jackson State (14-16), which was making its first NCAA Tournament appearance after winning the Southwestern Athletic Conference tournament.

At Auburn Hills, Danny Fortson scored 24 points and Darnell Burton added 18 as third-seeded Cincinnati soundly defeated 14th-seeded Butler 86-69 in the Midwest Region.

The Cincinnati Bearcats (26-7) will play the winner of the Iowa State-Illinois State game in the second round.

At Winston-Salem, Tony Gonzalez hit a fadeaway jumper with 58 seconds remaining to snap a tie and added three free throws in the final 36 seconds to lead fifth-seeded California to a 55-52 victory over 12th-seeded Princeton in the East Region.

California (22-8) will play the winner of the Villanova-Long Island University game in the second round.

Pippen scores 21, Bulls edge 76ers

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Scottie Pippen scored 31 points and the Chicago Bulls beat the Philadelphia 76ers 108-104 on Wednesday night.

It was the sixth 30-point game of the season for Pippen and his first since Feb. 18, and it included six points in the final two minutes to help keep Chicago ahead.

Pippen finished 12-for-18 from the field and 4-of-5 from 3-point range.

Michael Jordan added 23 points - the first time in four games that he finished with less than 30 - and Bill Wennington had 14 for the Bulls, who improved the NBA's best record to 55-8.

Wednesday's Games: Utah 117, New Jersey 102; Chicago 108, Philadelphia 104; Washington 104, Vancouver 82; Indiana 92, Atlanta 82; Orlando 96, Houston 95; L.A. Lakers 109, Golden State 101.

SPORTS

in brief

Sampras suffers first loss of 1997

INDIAN WELLS, Ca. (Reuter) - World No. 1 Pete Sampras suffered his first loss of the year Wednesday when 43rd-ranked Czech Bohdan Ulihrach beat him 7-6 (7-5), 7-5 in the second round of the Champions Cup. Sampras arrived on stadium court having won all 17 matches he played in 1997 and with an overall 20-match winning streak. He also had won 34 consecutive hardcourt matches, dating back to August 1996.

Mr Mulligan lands Cheltenham Gold Cup

CHELTEHAM (Reuter) - The 20-1 shot Mr Mulligan finally conquered his erratic jumping yesterday to land the Cheltenham Gold Cup and give champion jockey Tony McCoy a memorable big race double.

McCoy, who won Tuesday's Champion Hurdle on Make a Stand, stuck like glue to the strapping chestnut who was foot perfect to land steeplechasing's most coveted prize.

Mr Mulligan stormed up the Cheltenham hill to land the Gold Cup by nine lengths from the 33-1 shot Barton Bank with the Irish novice Dorans Pride third at 10-1 in the 14-runner field.

Teenager banned for drugs set to play again

LONDON (Reuter) - An English first division player who was banned from the game for taking cocaine, cannabis and ecstasy was cleared to play again yesterday.

The English FA lifted a suspension which it imposed on Charlton Athletic teenager Jay Nodley last November after he failed a drugs test.

But it said Nodley faced a lifetime ban from soccer if he tested positive again.

Graveney named England chairman of selectors

LONDON (AP) - David Graveney, who has never played for England, was appointed chairman of selectors yesterday, with former captains Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting working under him on the committee.

The newly-formed English Cricket Board has re-defined the role of the chairman of selectors and made it less powerful than when Graveney's predecessor, Ray Illingworth, had the job.

It will be a deliberately low-profile position with an emphasis on organization and administration while the England coach, captain and manager run the team.

Essex opener Gooch has been appointed a selector for two years and Middlesex batsman Gatting initially for one.

Aussie 'Bodyline' veteran dies at 89

MELBOURNE (AP) - Former Australian Test batsman Leo O'Brien - one of only two survivors of the famous Bodyline series against England in 1932-33 - died yesterday at the age of 89.

Sir Donald Bradman is now the only Australian survivor of the series.

O'Brien made his debut in the second Test of the 1932-33 series against the Englishmen in Melbourne.

A left-handed batsman and right-arm bowler, O'Brien was run out for 10 in the first innings of the Melbourne test and was bowled by paceman Harold Larwood, the scourge of the Australian batsmen, for 11 in the second innings.

Australia won the match by 111 runs, but O'Brien was dropped until the fifth Test of the series in Sydney, where he scored 61 in the first innings - the highest score of his Test career.

England won the match by eight wickets to clinch the controversial series 4-1.

Messier ties Bossy for 10th on all-time goals list

NEW YORK (Reuter) - Mark Messier tied former New York Islander Mike Bossy for 10th place on the NHL's all-time goals list with a power-play tally midway through the third period to give the New York Rangers a 3-2 win over the Washington Capitals Wednesday.

Messier beat Olaf Kolzig with a wrist shot from the right circle with 8:47 remaining in the game for his 573rd career goal and 34th of the season. Kolzig got a piece of the shot, but the puck found its way between his arm and body.

Wednesday's results: Hartford 6, Boston 3; NY Rangers 3, Washington 2; Chicago 3, Toronto 2; Calgary 3, Colorado 2; Phoenix 5, Pittsburgh 3 (OT); Anaheim 2, Detroit 1.

France aim for first Grand Slam in 10 years

LONDON (AP) - A young, developing French team are confident of beating Scotland and completing their first Five Nations rugby union Grand Slam in 10 years tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the final Five Nations match at Cardiff Arms Park before it is bulldozed to make way for a new stadium could see two old-timers back in opposition at fly half: Jonathan Davies for Wales and Rob Andrew for England.

After their stunning come-from-behind victory at Twickenham two weeks ago, where a 20-6 deficit was turned around for a 23-20 triumph over the English, France have emerged as the northern hemisphere's No. 1 team.

An entirely reserve three-quarter-line of Laurent Leflamand, Christophe Lamaison, Stephane Glas and David Venditti has stepped in because of injuries to stars such as Emile Ntamack, Richard Dourthe and Thomas Castaignede, also young players destined for great things in the future.

The combination of these swift and inventive players behind a well-organized and powerful pack gives the French plenty of opportunities to overwhelm the Scots in Paris.

Theoretically, England (four points from three games) could still win the title if they beat Wales in Cardiff (six from three).

Scotland have won only one of its three Five Nations games this season, and have been victorious in Paris only once since 1969. But that victory at the Parc des Princes was on the Scots' last visit in 1995 when former captain Gavin Hastings scored a spectacular late try for victory.

Hastings is no longer around and the Scots have been struggling to find the right blend behind the

scrum, not sure whether to field Gregor Townsend at center or fly half.

Against the French, he will be at center with Craig Chalmers at fly-half. But none of this will worry the French, who still have more injury problems to deal with.

The half-back pairing of Alain Penard and Philippe Carboneau won't start. They have been replaced by David Aucagne, who has played only 50 minutes of international rugby, and Guy Accocebery, recalled at scrum half.

The game in Cardiff may be all about nostalgia rather than England's bid to win the Triple Crown of victories over Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

It is the last Five Nations match in the 55,000-seater Cardiff Arms Park before it is demolished starting in May. Venue for some of the emotional Welsh victories of the late 1960s and '70s, it will make way for the 73,000-capacity Millennium stadium which will be completed in time for the 1999 World Cup - complete with a sliding roof.

The Welsh will be without five injured stars, while England have been forced to make their first change in this season's tournament.

Hence the recalls of Davies and Andrew.

Davies, who last faced England in 1987, replaces Arwel Thomas at fly half. Andrew, who announced his retirement from international rugby after the 1995 World Cup, will be on the England bench as cover for Mike Catt.

South African-born Catt has been called into the team as replacement for injured fly half Paul Grayson. The Welsh are also without experienced winger Iwan Evans, center Scott Gibbs and flank forward Colin Charvis.

NFL owners vote down instant replay

NEW DESERT, Ca. (Reuter) - National Football League owners voted down a proposal to allow instant replay during the NFL owners' meeting in Las Vegas Wednesday. The proposal would have allowed instant replay during the NFL owners' meeting in Las Vegas Wednesday. The proposal would have allowed instant replay during the NFL owners' meeting in Las Vegas Wednesday.

The NFL owners' meeting in Las Vegas Wednesday. The proposal would have allowed instant replay during the NFL owners' meeting in Las Vegas Wednesday. The proposal would have allowed instant replay during the NFL owners' meeting in Las Vegas Wednesday.

S. Waugh: Australia just can't lose

PORT ELIZABETH (Reuter) - Steve Waugh, who says Australia "just can't lose at the moment", epitomizes his team's mounting confidence on the eve of the second Test against South Africa starting today.

Waugh played a crucial role in Australia's victory by an innings and 196 runs in the first Test of the three-match series in Johannesburg last week, and he believes South Africa cannot recover from that drubbing.

"We just can't lose at the moment. We are on a roll. I know that's a big statement but if we play like we did at the Wanderers then South Africa just cannot win," said Waugh.

All-rounder Waugh's 160 and his record-breaking partnership of 385 with Greg Blewett were key elements in Australia's win in the opening Test.

Waugh's upbeat mood was reflected by his captain Mark Taylor, who said on Thursday: "If

we can continue playing like we did in the first Test, which was pretty much to this team's full potential, then we will be very difficult to beat."

Victory in the second Test would give Australia a winning 2-0 series lead and confirm them as unofficial world Test champions. Their successes in the past two years include winning home and away series against West Indies and a home series against Pakistan.

With Taylor passing a fitness Test on Wednesday after back trouble, Australia will be unchanged from the first Test. "It's difficult to change a team that has won by an innings and 200 runs," said Taylor.

"South African captain Hansie Cronje has not made excuses about the Johannesburg defeat, and says his side are ready to fight back."

"They (Australia) have every reason to be so confident but they are making a mistake if they think we will lie down again," said Cronje.

Thames: South Africa (from) - Gary Kirsten, Adam Bacher, Jacques Kallis, Daryl Cullum, Hansie Cronje (captain), Herschelle Gibbs, Brian McMillan, Shaun Pollock, Dave Richardson, Farooz Syed, Allan Donald, Paul Adams, Lance Klusener.

Australia (probable) - Matthew Hayden, Mark Taylor (captain), Andrew Elton, Mark Waugh, Steve Waugh, Greg Blewett, Michael Bevan, Jim Hough, Shane Warne, Jason Gillespie, Glenn McGrath.



Bach retires

The Supreme Court bids farewell to Justice Gavriel Bach (second from left) who turned 70 yesterday and retired. (Brian Handler)

Appeal against PT mayor's acquittal denied

The Supreme Court yesterday rejected the state's appeal against the acquittal of Petah Tikva Mayor Giora Lev, who had been charged with bribery and breach of trust. The court criticized his actions, but ruled that they were not criminal.

According to the charge sheet, Lev promoted contractor Mordechai Dinovitz's interests in Petah Tikva and, in return, Dinovitz arranged funding for Lev's wife to travel to the US.

Dinovitz helped Lev set up a development fund for Petah Tikva and introduced him to potential contributors, including Riki Heinitz, an Israeli who was living in Tel Aviv.

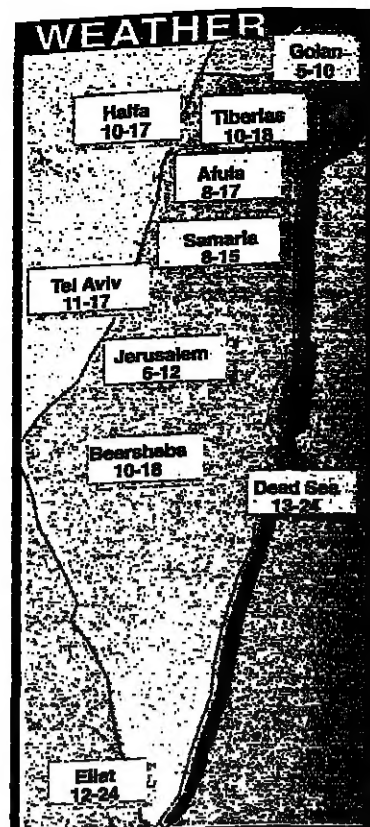
In August 1990, Lev was scheduled to travel to Los Angeles to meet with potential contributors. Shortly after Lev told Dinovitz that he would be traveling alone, Heinitz sent Lev a ticket for his

wife. At the same time, Petah Tikva signed a contract for Dinovitz to construct a park there.

The Tel Aviv District Court acquitted Lev in May 1994, noting that it is common practice and sometimes even required for public figures to travel with their spouses. The state appealed this decision.

Justices Aharon Barak, Gavriel Bach and Eliezer Goldberg denied the appeal. The contract with Dinovitz was carried out appropriately and benefited Petah Tikva, Bach noted.

The Local Council Authority released a statement yesterday congratulating Lev on his acquittal. (Tum)



Forecast: Rain in the north and central regions. Shabbat: Rainy, drop in temperatures.

Bar-On investigation near end

By RAINE MARCUS

At the end of the seventh week of the police investigation into the Bar-On for Hebron Affair, five key figures were summoned for questioning at the Jaffa branch of the National Police Headquarters yesterday.

Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office Avigdor Lieberman, Shas MK Aryeh Deri, businessman David Appel and attorney Roni Bar-On all were questioned. Deri's advisor,

Yehuda Avidan, was summoned to give evidence for the first time. He called the allegations "total nonsense."

Yesterday's questioning was an attempt by police to wrap up the investigation, sparked off by Channel 1's broadcast that Bar-On's was appointed attorney-general as part of a deal in which Deri allegedly told the Prime Minister's Office that Shas would support the Hebron redeployment in return for Bar-On's appointment. The Channel 1 report also

said that Bar-On was chosen, not only for his Likud affiliations, but also because he agreed to arrange some sort of plea bargain in Deri's ongoing criminal trial.

Police are supposed to complete their investigation next week, and the state attorney is expected to decide if there is

room to warrant criminal indictments against MKs, ministers and others involved. So far it is not clear if any of those questioned will be charged on criminal counts or whether the whole case was simply a political conspiracy, indicating improper government and "wheeling and dealing" but not criminal offenses.

Police and the State Attorney's Office also will rule whether Channel 1's report was truthful. Police believe they know who leaked the report to Channel 1

reporter Ayala Hasson, but have not investigated in full the reason behind the leak, which, sources said, "was far from proper."

Lieberman was questioned yesterday, as were Deri, Bar-On and Appel. The latter two already had been questioned this past week. Sources said that police, in the final stages of their probe, now are comparing all four's versions of events to examine if there are contradictions.

Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi is to be questioned next week.

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	LOW	F	HIGH	C	W
Amsterdam	08	43	13	55	cloudy
Berlin	08	43	11	52	cloudy
Buenos Aires	19	86	28	82	cloudy
Calcutta	00	32	84	36	rain
Chicago	02	28	33	37	cloudy
Copenhagen	02	28	33	37	cloudy
Frankfurt	02	28	33	37	cloudy
Geneva	01	27	32	36	cloudy
Helsinki	01	27	32	36	cloudy
Hong Kong	21	70	25	77	clear
Jakarta	14	57	21	69	clear
London	08	43	12	54	cloudy
Los Angeles	12	50	21	70	clear
Moscow	06	43	21	70	clear
Montreal	16	50	21	70	clear
New York	03	27	32	36	cloudy
Paris	03	27	32	36	cloudy
Peking	04	38	17	63	clear
Stockholm	02	28	33	37	cloudy
Sydney	05	41	14	57	cloudy
Tokyo	10	14	14	57	cloudy
Vienna	04	38	15	59	cloudy
Zurich	04	38	15	59	cloudy

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